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THE

LIFE OF DERMODY.

"He who such polish'd lines so well could form,
Was Passion's slave, was Indiscretion's child:
Now earth-enamour'd, grov'ling with the worm;
Now seraph-plum'd, the wonderful, the wild."

DERMODY's *Enthusiast.*

S. Gosnell, Printer, Little Queen Street.

THE

LIFE

OF

THOMAS DERMODY:

INTERSPERSED WITH PIECES OF

Original Poetry,

MANY EXHIBITING

UNEXAMPLED PREMATURITY

OF

GENUINE POETICAL TALENT;

AND CONTAINING A SERIES OF

CORRESPONDENCE

WITH

SEVERAL EMINENT CHARACTERS.

BY

JAMES GRANT RAYMOND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM MILLER, ALBEMARLE STREET;

AND J. ARCHER AND M. MAHON, DUBLIN.

1806.

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THE

LIFE

OF

THOMAS DERMODY.

DERMODY once more directed his course to the capital, and the last donation of his generous benefactress enabled him to perform his journey with ease and comfort. He had not been many days in Dublin, before his finances were entirely expended; but, regardless of the consequences, he still loitered about the city till his credit was exhausted, and his habiliments were in a state of dilapidation. In this situation he began to think it highly necessary either to inquire after his old friends and patrons, or to search for new ones. It was his custom while at Killeigh, frequently to correspond with his former

esteemed friend and adviser Mr. White; and whether it was merely for the sake of information, or with a view to secure a continuance of his favour when he should arrive in the metropolis, he acquainted him with his determination of further pursuing his fortune in England. The particulars of this information, and his own introduction to Dermody on his arrival in Dublin, are thus feelingly related by that worthy gentleman himself:

"He wrote to me occasionally; and for a time I had no reason to doubt of his being highly satisfied with his situation, and duly sensible of the flattering prospects placed before him. But, alas! his evil Genius still haunted him. I perceived a falling off; and something wavering in his sentiments, that visibly marked an aberration from the destined course. This gave me pain, for I really wished him well. It was about this time he inclosed me the poem which

you will find in the appendix to a volume of mine afterwards collected and published by my son *. It was there inserted with a small alteration in the date;

---

* *TO SAMUEL WHITE, ESQ.*

For thee, whose brow the vivid laurel shades,
Timid I touch the muse's simplest shell;
For thou hast woo'd the sweet Aönian maids,
And felt inspir'd the pure poetic spell.

Oft 'mid the echoing abbey's saintly gloom,
When all the spectred aisles responsive rung,
Thy praises wont the darkness to illume,
And shed a ray of lustre while I sung.

When pensive Eve her fairy curtain drew,
With tender hand, athwart the heaving breast
Of yon still lake, and gemm'd the watery blue,
Thy honour'd name in artless song I drest.

Taught by my strain, each deep dell knew thy worth,
Each savage echo and each flow'ry wild;
Or when the red sun walk'd, majestic, forth,
Or o'er the scene with placid pleasure smil'd.

and the note* added with the view of promoting the subscription to a publication of

---

Then deign to consecrate my youthful lay,
And bid the wreath I wove ambrosial bloom;
So shall it mock the frown of sad decay,
And live the noblest scutcheon of my tomb.

THOMAS DERMODY.

* "This extraordinary young genius is from Ennis, in the county of Clare. His father, reputed a good classic scholar, had a flourishing school there; and under his instruction, at a very early age indeed, young Dermody gave proofs of capacity. Specimens of his composition were handed about and deservedly admired; but he was ignorant of the world, and the domestic scene was too confined for his expanding ideas. He left the place of his nativity: and a few years ago arrived, under great difficulties, in the metropolis; where his surprising talents soon introduced him to notice, and procured him an honourable patronage. He has lately published proposals for printing by subscription poems written in his *thirteenth* year; which were inclosed to me, accompanied with the foregoing stanzas. A few of his juvenile productions were formerly presented to the curious. They abound with original and striking beauties, and taste and judgment are eloquent in their praise.

"SAMUEL WHITE."

his, then in agitation. This poem, which I really think beautiful, was in fact preparatory to a request of an extraordinary nature. In the letter alluded to, which I received about three weeks after the former one containing the poem, he mentions his intention of quitting Mr. Boyd's; with a design, after settling some affairs here, of trying *the air* of London: and, inconceivable as it may appear, solicits my interest with my *quondam* pupil and friend Mr. Sheridan, patentee of Drury-lane, to give him a situation in the theatre. This, you may be sure, for obvious reasons I strongly opposed; and in a long letter by return of post, remonstrated to the utmost of my power against the futility of such a step. He had not talents for the stage, nor a single requisite that could entitle him to respectability as an actor. In a few days after, conceive my astonishment when I met him sauntering up Grafton-street. He now became connected with a bookseller,

proprietor of a public print; and for a time picked up a sorry pittance as a paragraphist, and by now and then a little fugitive lucubration for a magazine. But he figured not long in that department: with his usual versatility he grew weary of the employment; and, without assigning any cause, suddenly disappeared. For a time, he was dead to his friends. Going out one evening, I had a letter put into my hand: it was from Dermody, requesting me to lend him half-a-guinea. I knew the writing; but as there was no date, I conjectured he did not wish his place of residence to be known. Nevertheless, I gave the trifle; and partly to be sure that he got it, and partly (I trust) from better motives, followed the messenger at a convenient distance, and by that means discovered his lodging. There I found him in a miserable plight indeed: lying stretched on a flock pallet without curtains, in a dark filthy garret; his shoes besmeared with mud

(one of the soles quite gone, the other all broken) lying carelessly by the bedside, his stockings in the same condition, and his poor feet all torn and bloody. He could hardly raise his head, and appeared fatigued almost to death. No wonder; he had been at Bellevue, the seat of Mr. Latouche, a rough and stony road of above sixteen Irish miles, and returned that same day. It was to solicit a subscription; but not having an opportunity of preferring his suit, the family being abroad,

A pamper'd menial drove him from the door.

On his way back he stopped at a petty alehouse, where his shoe-buckles fell victims to appease the cravings of hunger: it was a requisite sacrifice; for without some such expedient to recruit his strength and spirits a little, he could not have reached town, and at night (there was no alternative) must have shrouded from the inclemency of the weather under a hedge. Such are

the results of wilfulness and improvidence!—But that was no time to moralize. We had a comfortable little supper together, and the story of the day's expedition was our dessert."

In this deplorable state did he remain for a considerable time; during which he was chiefly supported by his tried and constant friend Mr. Owenson, by whose interest he was soon enabled to publish his poems. So assiduous was that gentleman in his exertions to make this publication profitable, that he frequently took his stand in an eminent bookseller's shop, and offered the books for sale to persons who entered, sometimes relating the doleful history of the luckless bard; and even assailed the passengers that passed the door. As Mr. Owenson was very generally known and respected, he was seldom unsuccessful in these applications; and by this mode he procured him considerable relief. Nor

were Dermody's personal applications less productive: he too seldom solicited in vain. Such is the fascination of genius, that if its appeals do not always triumph over the heart, they are never wholly disregarded.—That his condition was often pitiable, and his benefactor's liberality as often praiseworthy and acceptable, will appear from the two following laconic epistles:

To Mr. Owenson, No. 60, *Dame-street.*

"YOUR bounty to me has been like the ocean, boundless and illimitable. From my appearance I am almost ashamed to call on you: I shall only say that I have fasted for a longer time than caused the death of Chatterton.

"THOMAS DERMODY."

To Mr. Dermody.

"ACCEPT the inclosed; and while so poor a man as myself can purchase a loaf, you shall never want a share of it, in

common with my dear girls*. In answer to your former note,—call at Mr. Dixon's, the corner of Crow-street; and by my desire he will give you three pair of stockings, such as may suit you: but as Homer and Hesiod never wore silk stockings, it will be time enough to get some of that commodity when you enter the college, if ever you should have grace enough to accomplish so desired an object. Get them of such a kind as will be useful, not fashionable. Call at Rourk's, and you will get a pair of shoes: I think you want them.

"ROBERT OWENSON."

It was in one of those trying situations

* Though foreign to the main subject of these memoirs, it is a just tribute of praise due to Mr. Owenson to say, that he has bestowed an education upon his two daughters, which has enabled them to associate with the first characters for rank and talents in Ireland, and by whom they are esteemed. Miss Sidney Owenson possesses a true poetical fancy; and is the author of two novels: "St. Clair," and "The Novice of St. Dominick."

about this period, when our poet was depressed by disappointment and abandoned by the world, that chance brought the writer of these memoirs acquainted with the unfortunate subject of them: and it is with some pleasure and consolation to himself he relates, that his better fortune afforded him through a number of succeeding years the means of often alleviating his misfortunes; and when extreme poverty, disease, and death itself approached and struck him down, enabled him to pay some respectful regard to his remains and to his memory.

Many of his former friends still entertained the hope that a little experience of the world would wean him from those prevailing follies which had so long sullied his character and degraded his genius. Even the worthy gentleman whose esteem he had forfeited, and whose house he had abandoned, regarded him with some lingering sparks of affection; and from the following letter it would appear that he was using the secret means of rescuing him from himself.

"Killeigh, 27th May 1792.

"DEAR TOM,

"YOUR trunk Mrs. B. had no opportunity of sending till last week, as the flour-cars do not now stop in this town. I send you the receipt as your voucher, when you call for it. I have still some books of yours; Johnson's Dictionary, Quintilian, and Clair's Lucian. If you have leisure, I should be very much obliged to you if you would transcribe for Mr. Preston the following pieces, or send him the books; the Court Memoirs, the poem on the evacuation of Boston, and the prose Introduction to the Temple of Cotytto: he lives in Gloucester-street, and it might be of use to you to oblige him. I promised to do them myself, but had not the opportunity.

"I would recommend it to you earnestly to try to get entrance in the college as a sizer. Examinations are the Tuesday after Trinity Sunday: Dr. Burrowes can tell you the hour. You may be assured there has been application made to the provost

in your favour through lord Donoughmore, and by other channels; and you may depend on it, the best way to obtain new friends, and secure a continuance of the old, is to shew an inclination to make some exertions in your own favour. You will not be obliged to go into another examination till the 20th of October. I think the application to the provost will secure your entrance though you may not be so well prepared: I know it has often been the case.

"I am obliged to you for your offer of your poems: but shall send to you by Daniel, who soon goes to town; nor need you trouble yourself with inquiring for a conveyance down here. I shall be much pleased to hear of your success; and hope you will believe me

"Yours very sincerely,

"H. Boyd."

The mode which Dermody now adopted for soliciting favours, and attracting the notice and attention of eminent persons,

could scarcely be resisted; and those to whom he made his applications, generally continued his friends till they were alienated from him by his imprudence. That he had taste and discrimination in the choice of his patrons, will appear from the following testimonies:

To the Right Honourable and Reverend the Bishop of Dromore.

"SIR,

"WITH the most timid consciousness of my own inability, I presume on the honour of addressing you, as a child of the muse and of misfortune. I remember formerly to have felt, while perusing your lordship's admirable Reliques of Ancient Poesy, the most sincere and elevated enthusiasm of admiration. Nor was I less charmed with the Hermit of Warkworth's 'legendary lore:' while I read I was entranced; and my solitude was ideally thronged by a Spenser, a Cowley, a Drayton, or a Carew.

"I am now publishing a collection of poems; in which I have arrogantly inscribed one sonnet to your lordship, the effusion of wonder more than of genius. To Mr. Sterling also I have paid a small tribute of thanks, in Parnassian incense, for the delight and classical improvement reaped from his genuine page of fancy.

"My age is not sixteen; yet I have read most of the celebrated authors in Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and a little in Spanish, particularly in my dear Cervantes. But, alas! it avails me nothing to know more than the dullest of mankind: the eccentric energy of Savage, and the amazing genius of Chatterton, could not purchase the necessaries of life.

"To you, my lord, who have written on the Sydneys of ancient date, and who feel their generosity, I apply for some hopes of future happiness in life: for some station where the thorn of adversity may be exchanged for the olives of quiet;

and where, looking on the troubled ocean of life, I may bless my deliverer.

"I am, sir, your lordship's humble servant, "THOMAS DERMODY."

To Henry Grattan, Esq.

"SIR,

"YOUR liberality to me has been increased more than threefold by the elegant though undeserved approbation of your letter. The honour, I hope, will attend me with life; for though unworthy such particular attention now, it gives me room to imagine I may improve to some merit hereafter.

"The following request I most ardently desire to gain your pardon for: any one but yourself might suppose me advancing too much on your generosity. Inclosed I take the liberty to send you a little poem addressed to that noble body, the Whig-

club. I am assured that the humblest production offered by you, sir, in the cause of youth and inexperience, would meet the concurrence of all good and worthy people.

"I am, sir, with esteem and gratitude, your obedient servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY."

So highly did Mr. Grattan estimate the talents of Dermody, that in his zeal to serve him he introduced many passages of the above-mentioned poem into a celebrated speech in the house of commons, and strongly recommended its author to the particular notice of many persons of taste and fortune. The poem itself is lost; but the following introduction to it may perhaps give some idea of its general purport.

To the Whig-Club.

"GENTLEMEN,

"EMBOLDENED by the patriotic generosity of your public proceedings, as a native of Ireland I lay the unadorned efforts

of a youthful muse before your inspection, assured that you will be proud to cherish the humblest adventurer who is ambitious of displaying his most early attempts in his own country, where candour and partial attention are predominant. The blossom of genius must be nourished with the kindly dew of favour before it can attain the flourishing luxuriance of perfection. If I designed an encomium in these few lines, I might hail the distinguished members of your illustrious club as the supporters of a nation, as the censors of corruption, and patrons of merit in its lowest state: but I esteem the general applause of a free people as the noblest panegyric; and therefore, after many wishes for the success of your glorious endeavours, and availing myself of the honour of claiming your pardon for this intrusion, shall decline into my native obscurity.

"I am, gentlemen, your obliged and sincere servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY."

Through the kindness of Mr. Grattan he was shortly after this time introduced to that celebrated orator and patriot, Henry Flood, esq. who honoured him with his particular friendship while he lived. Dermody retained a grateful sense of his favours, and at his death composed an elegy which much increased his own reputation. It appears from the following curious fragment written by Mr. Flood, that he had suggested to Dermody a plan for composing a poem on the British constitution, comprehending the whole of its history from the Norman conquest down to the accession of the house of Hanover.

"EXORDIUM: something like the beginning of Paradise Lost, but suited to the subject of the British constitution and its reform.

"Read Macaulay's History of England. Describe, from its earliest beginning, the dawn of liberty, or strugglings of those

champions of the people. Describe the ages of superstition: the tyranny of the first William. Paint the law of conquest as the most wicked. Shew monarchy, with a few exceptions, from William downward, in its truest colours: the people in the most wretched slavery and ignorance. Paint superstition and popery: and shout in her ear, that that religion was the established one when monarchy was in its full power. The reign of John, &c.: the contending nobles, and the power of the pope in those days, strong subjects for your muse. Monarchy and the nobility (which is Aristocracy) waging their wars; but still the people in an abject state of slavery to both, and tuns of their blood spilt in the cause where king and nobles were fighting for power.

"Then the wars of York and Lancaster; all for kingly power: the same blood shed, but still the people in abject slavery. Run through the whole constitutional history;

the aspiring characters down to Harry the Eighth: but above all take care that the outlines of your historical painting be true. The Reformation; the throwing off the papal yoke: that being the first dawn of English liberty. Harry's character as drawn by Mrs. Macaulay; indeed all the characters as drawn by her: also queen Elizabeth, and Mary queen of Scots; those are openings for the finest feelings of your muse. From Elizabeth's death, the entire throwing off the papal yoke; Martin Luther, and John Calvin: at those times the British constitution gradually advancing. Then the bigoted James the First: the political characters of that reign. Then Charles the First: a wide field for your muse. Cromwel thought a devil; an instrument, under Providence, of much good: his character; magnanimity. The state of the nation, and the character of the people, &c. till the arrival of George the First.

"H. Flood."

It is to be lamented that the poem addressed to the Whig-club, and that written from the sketch and outline drawn by Mr. Flood, are both lost. The opinions of a boy who had not attained his sixteenth year on the proceedings of a formidable political body; the sentiments of an enthusiastic mind tracing the birth of British freedom through the mouldering pages of remote history; and marking with elevated ardour its gradual progress through the dark ages of superstition, ignorance, tyranny, and usurpation; would undoubtedly have been considered as literary curiosities. On such a theme what might not the fervour of youthful and approved genius have accomplished? Nor can it be supposed, since he condescended to point out the way, that Mr. Flood would have recommended so arduous an undertaking to the attention of one incapable of comprehending his vast plan. On this subject, however, the exertions of the poet and the speculative

opinions of the patron are destroyed: consequently no other gratification can be now received from their combined efforts, than the knowledge that such a plan was suggested to Dermody by Mr. Flood; the friend of truth, learning, genius, and humanity.

It was Dermody's constant misfortune to lose his patron almost at the moment when he found him; not from his committing any flagrant enormity, but merely from thoughtlessness and neglect. He seldom was denied an interview, and those to whom he was recommended generally treated him with kindness and respect: but if he received an invitation to the house of his patron, and was by any means prevented from attending at the limited hour, he never called again after occasioning such a disappointment; considering his own neglect as a crime that admitted neither palliation nor pardon. From this habit, those who wished to serve him frequently lost sight of

him; for when he committed an error of this kind he always flew to some obscure corner of the city, and concealed himself from the kindest inquiries, not appearing abroad again till his necessities urged him. With such a disposition it cannot be wondered at that he was in continual distress. Yet he had the good-fortune to be often favoured with not only the attention of the great, but the esteem of the learned; and while he experienced the generosity of a Charlemont, a Flood, a Grattan, and a Percy, he was flattered with the applause of a Preston, a Walker, a Sterling, and a Tighe. From Mr. Walker, the accomplished author of the Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy, he received many liberal tokens of esteem; and in a congratulatory ode written to that gentleman on his return from Italy, has evinced his gratitude in a classic strain. Those who will compare the following epistle to Joseph Cooper Walker while in Italy, with the lines (suc-

ceeding it) addressed to the honourable Monck Mason, will be convinced that Dermody would not flatter where his judgment condemned, nor censure where it was gratified.

EPISTLE TO JOSEPH COOPER WALKER, ESQ. WHILE IN ITALY.

" While safe on Latium's classic shore,
Beneath her cloudless skies you rove,
The Mantuan's mouldering cot explore,
Or Tully's desolated grove;

Oh! let *my* artless Muse, unknown
To all the charms thy ancients knew,
Awake the soft pipe's liquid tone;
A song, if not sublime, yet true.

'Tis thine, with fond research to trace
The shrinking river's latent vein;
From dust to dig th' imperial face,
Or raise to light the lofty strain.

Then, like the bee, full-fraught return,
Instruction pour from Wisdom's urn,
And bid the Alban graces smile
On lost Juverna's barren isle *.

* This prediction was fulfilled in the year 1799, when Mr. Walker's Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy appeared.

Methinks, a visionary band
Of palm-crown'd shades attend thy path;
With vigour arm thy curious hand,
And lull the sleeping serpent's wrath.

Old Tiber on his yellow stream
(His blue stole floating in the wind)
Awakes from his long-lengthen'd dream,
And whispers to thy tranced mind:

Recounts what former deeds were done,
What poets sung, what warriors fought;
Embalms with tears each godlike son,
And dwells upon the noble thought:

Recounts the fair historic race
That told each martial tale to fame,
That wont each hidden fault to trace,
And falters at his Livy's name.

Oh, couldst thou from some gentle shade
Retrieve the lost, the priceless page,
The depths of elder Time invade,
And brighten blank Oblivion's age!

The wish is vain: what taste can do,
What elegance with sense combin'd,
Thy learned toil shall bring to view,
And nourish the abstracted mind.

Perchance, with later genius smit,
By Vaucluse' silver springs you sit,
And 'mid the purple bow'rets hear
The minstrel of the blooming year.

Thee Dante's holy spirit leads
Through asphodel-embroider'd meads,
Or tumbles with impetuous sweep
Down the rough mountain's horrid steep;

Meanwhile, the penal lashes sound
With lamentable shrieks of woe;
And threats the aching soul that wound
Shrill-murmur'd from the gulf below.

Or he who chose Orlando fierce,
By Fancy fir'd, his beauteous guide;
And rais'd Adventure's knightly pride
In wild varieties of verse.

Or rather Tasso's chaster lay,
Melodious melting, or sublime;
Tasso, who sweetest could display
The lulling witchery of rhime.

Whate'er thy task, pure truth is thine,
That 'mid Norwegian frosts would shine;
And manly knowledge, temper'd mild,
With winning ease, serenely free:
For, when fond Nature moulded thee,
The Muse, the Virtues, and the Graces, smil'd.

"THOMAS DERMODY."

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MONCK MASON.

"Well says John Gay, my rhiming brother,
'Wits are game-cocks to one another;'
Who spur, jerk, flutter, shake the feather,
Alias the pen ('twill do for either),
And never pause where wise birds should,
Till both be tumbling in the mud.
Lo! sapient Monck, such fate had I,
When 'neath thy pure unjaundic'd eye
(Damn it, the last line jingles not:
Two *Is*; would they were out! however,
Like Shakspeare, that deer-thief so clever,
I scorn to blot.)
The very telescope of taste,
My nugatory rhimes I plac'd:
Right carefully, thank God! return'd,
Fine luck they were not drown'd or burn'd;
For certes, though replete with frolic all,
They were, I own, most diabolical.
Yet hearing (false or true, no matter)
That you had sense (this world will flatter!);
That you on Pindus'-hill a passenger,
Had rais'd the poor, old ghost of Massinger,
Perturbed poet; and with notes
(Dry food as chesnuts, chips, or oats)
Stuff'd him down honest people's throats;

I really must confess I'd hopes
You'd like my metaphors, and tropes,
Nor see the minstrel lost, forsaken:
Lord, how that minstrel was mistaken!

"THOMAS DERMODY."

His introduction to Mr. Edward Tighe was as singular as it was ludicrous. Mr. Tighe, being in the habit of frequenting an eminent bookseller's in College-green, was one day, as he left the shop, accosted by a ragged boy who told him that he had just left a letter of introduction at his house, and waited upon him by the desire of a gentleman who was his particular and intimate friend. Mr. Tighe, doubting perhaps the truth of his story, desired him in a very rough tone to go about his business, and walked on without giving the circumstance any further consideration. But as he ascended the steps to knock at his door, he perceived Dermody close behind him; who loudly asserted his inno-

cence, and added that he had taken the liberty of following him home for the purpose of convincing him that he had not told a falsehood. Mr. Tighe, being of rather an irritable temper, began to treat him as an impostor; and was on the point of knocking him down with his cane, when fortunately the servant appeared at the door. Dermody used no attempt to assuage the choler of his furious assailant, but made the best of his way from him by flight. The letter convinced Mr. Tighe of his error; and, generously conceiving he was bound to atone for the injury he had done, he dispatched the servant with the utmost speed to bring Dermody back. The latter had by this time nearly reached the bottom of the street; when turning round, and perceiving the servant making huge strides towards him (for the purpose, as his fears informed him, of giving him the bastinado), he set off with increased velocity, nor was

he convinced that his apprehensions were groundless till he had been thus *run down* after a long chase.

When he returned, Mr. Tighe apologized for the error he had committed, and assured him that he would make every reparation for the alarm he had occasioned him. As the letter informed Mr. Tighe that the bearer was a poet, the first part of the interview produced only some frivolous questions and answers incident to such an introduction; but at length in an unlucky moment Mr. Tighe, thinking that the boy was merely gifted with the knack of rhiming, asked him if he had gone through his Latin Accidence. This so enraged Dermody that he snatched his hat from the table, and without much ceremony left the house. During the early part of their conversation, Dermody had received a pamphlet written by Mr. Tighe, which was to be the subject of a copy of verses: it had luckily been put into his pocket before the last

fatal question; but from the fury and indignation that blazed in his countenance when he darted from the room, Mr. Tighe supposed that an everlasting separation had taken place. He was deceived: the following day Dermody made his appearance, with the pamphlet written by Mr. Tighe in one hand, and his own poem in the other; when, to the great astonishment of that gentleman, instead of a panegyric on his book, a keen and pointed satire was presented. He had the liberality to applaud the poem, and reward the author: he presented him with five guineas, a snuff-coloured suit of clothes, and a cocked hat, the formidable eccentricity of which surpassed that of "ancient Pistol." The hat and suit were, by Mr. Tighe's desire as a lesson of economy, to be worn without alteration: and Dermody, to the no small amusement of his friends, for some time figured away in these sober and antiquated habiliments; the breeches being tied below

the calf of the leg, the waistcoat lapelled to his knees, the skirts of the coat dangling at his heels, and the hat with a significant and solemn slouch covering both his ears.

The severity of Mr. Tighe's temper, occasioned by a complication of bodily infirmities, seldom permitted him to argue on any subject with coolness; and as he often had reason to reprove the indiscretions of Dermody, he generally, before he could reach the end of his lecture, became so irritated that his utterance was almost choked, and oaths and broken sentences succeeded each other so fast as almost to frighten his juvenile and offending auditor from ever again appearing before him. Dermody, however, did not always receive the friendly admonitions of Mr. Tighe with a patient and a becoming grace: he sometimes considered them as high and undeserved affronts, which wealth and greatness had no warrantable right to offer to humility and dependance; and would con-

sequently withdraw himself from his censor's notice. Mr. Tighe had too high a sense of honour, too much respect for genius, too much feeling and generosity, to be offended at these instances of resentment; and though he would not acknowledge that he had been too severe, he was always the first to solicit a reconciliation, which he generally did in the following manner.

To Mr. Dermody.

"If you have the honesty to acknowledge that you have done an injury to yourself by disregarding the advice of a friend, and will promise to treat that advice with respect for the time to come, I shall not hesitate once more to say I shall be pleased to see you.

"EDWARD TIGHE."

At such a summons Dermody would appear full of contrition, and be again restored to favour and to friendship. In a

short time however he retired from his friend and counsellor, and was not heard of for many months. When his necessities once more drew him from that mean obscurity in which he too often delighted, his first application was to Mr. Tighe; who sent him some immediate relief accompanied with the following note, the last he was ever favoured with from that gentleman.

To Mr. Dermody.

"NOTWITHSTANDING your ungrateful conduct to Mr. Owenson, Mr. Austin, and that universally honoured and esteemed lady the countess of Moira, I am endeavouring to form schemes for your living and advantage. You must, I conclude, become an author by profession, or an actor, or both. In either of these characters one can assist you.

"The stage is open to you, if you have talents; and the press is equally so.

"I have two grand and favourite objects

for this country: 1. the diminution of drams of all sorts, which destroy the people in every sense; 2. the rearing, and employing in industry, orphan children of both sexes, in order to produce an uncontaminated race. If you can by your pen assist these great objects in prose or verse, you will do great credit to yourself, benefit the public, and create the means of living. Byrne or Moore * shall purchase your works: and the first may be entitled 'The Devil's Gift for 1793; consisting of Epigrams, Ballads, and comical Essays.'

"EDWARD TIGHE."

Mr. Walker also, in the following letter, pointed out the lake of Killarney as a fit subject for his muse; but it cannot now be ascertained whether he ever exercised his fancy on that scene of romantic enchantment.

* Two respectable booksellers.

To Mr. Dermody.

"DEAR SIR,

"I NEVER read Mary de Clifford, nor was I ever taught to think highly of it. It was forced upon me by my bookseller. I am really at a loss for a subject to recommend to you. If you are fond of indulging in description, I think you might make the lake of Killarney the scene of a novel or romance, borrowing a subject from the early history of Ireland. A bard occasionally introduced, would give you an opportunity of exercising your lyric powers. Historic novels are fashionable; besides, the scenes of novels or romances have rarely been laid in Ireland. Have you ever been at Killarney? But you may form an idea of it from the descriptions of Leslie and Dunn.

"I am not so fortunate as to possess Gondibert, but I shall leave out Brooke's works for you.

"Yours, J. C. W."

It may be not unpleasing to those who feel an interest in contemplating the progress of premature genius, to know the sentiments of a father whose fatal example had tainted the dawning mind of his child with those baneful prejudices, which so often degraded his youthful character, and destroyed the fair prospects of his riper years. The letter here introduced is the only memorial that can be obtained either of his shame or of his paternal affection. The sentiments contained in it are of rather a superficial texture; affectionate but not disinterested, glaring but not profound. He certainly loved the boy; he cannot therefore be condemned on that point: but it is true also that the misfortunes which embittered the son's short and eventful life, were chiefly occasioned by the disreputable propensities, the destructive irregularities, of a father.

"Ennis, August 6th, 1792.

"MY DEAR CHILD,

"THE letter you got from me I intended to have sent by a man who seemed to know you well since you went to Dublin, but I find his business required his setting out before I could conveniently write. His account corresponds with your own. He told me you were in the first place of estimation with your former great friends, till overset through the industrious perfidy of the Dublin teachers. I am happy to think it was for no misconduct; as even men of experience are too often deluded, and why not unprotected youth far from sincere counsel? However, be not chagrined at early disappointments; as they may, upon due recollection, serve as a lesson and monitor to guard against future, the wiles of the designing, and the profuse promises of the exalted.

"As to my situation, if not better it is

not worse than when you saw me. My school is just able to support me and your brother decently, and independant of the frowns of others; and would be better had it not been for the emulation of Fitzg. and an usher of his who has opened now. I am ill paid, as usual; yet there is money due to me if it could be called in, and very little due of me. My former dissipation I have lost sight of. I will not tire you with repeating incidents; but shall content myself with thinking upon the welcome moment which you mention of coming down, when you and I shall unbosom our pleasures and pains to each other. Five years, which have been five thousand to me, have now nearly elapsed since you left me; but, in your own language, you now give a balsam that will heal all sores.

"I should be glad to know if you have finished your Greek and Latin classics; as you must from three years study, which I am satisfied you have intensely applied:

whose school you have been at; if of a man of eminence; if a boarder or day-scholar: what your patroness allowed you: if you have any thought of college: if you think yourself fully prepared: if you will be able to make as much of your book as would enter you; and how much, clear of all expenses, you think it will bring you. This I say as I am sorry I can't enter you, as I could wish. I know college is a good way for future bread, but I do not mean to enforce it if you have any material objection.

"I am sorry to hear of Mr. Austin's behaviour: how could you have deserved such cruelty? Write speedily, and tell me every particular of your disappointments without reserve: whom could you impart them to but me? You know I have had my portion too; partly through myself, partly through others. Bring me a few of your books: if you have any to spare, I think I can dispose of them here. Tell

me how many subscribers, and how much your distinguished friend Mr. Grattan has given. I have told my best acquaintance that you are much in his good wishes; which, you know, must do you singular honour, and raise you in the minds of all who hear that you are looked upon by so exalted a personage.

"I shall not tire you with more than to recommend my blessing, and the protection of the all-seeing eye, to you. May He be ever with you, my dear child, and shield you against the jaundice-eyed malice of your enemies! Adieu!

"NICHOLAS DERMODY."

The casual supplies which he from time to time obtained, did not however rescue him from his distresses; which were now so heavy, that, to avoid the importunities of those to whom he owed small sums, he often wandered among the fields by day, and sought the meanest shelter by night.

He was strictly honest, and punctual in his payments; and if his necessities urged him at any time to satisfy the cravings of hunger with the pittance that was preserved to pay his lodgings, he would not approach the house till he was furnished with a sum sufficient to discharge the debt, but wandered from place to place till chance again enabled him to conquer his calamities and face his creditors.

Money had no charms for Dermody. Nothing gave him greater happiness than parting with it: and when his better fortune chanced to prevail, and left in his hands an overplus which none could demand, his heart overflowed with kindness; and till the last shilling was expended, he made every stranger a partner of his happiness. As in his genius, so in his particular propensities, he resembled Savage: with this difference; that Savage retired alone to satiate his appetite in mean obscurity, but Dermody had no enjoyment

without a friend or companion. He did not, however, always despair when assailed by poverty: the following lines shew a mind free at least from violent perturbation.

"In a cold empty garret, contented I sit,
With no spark to warm me but sparks of old wit:
On a crazy black stool doleful ditties I sing;
And, poor as a beggar, am blest as a king.
Then why should I envy the great folks and proud,
Since God has giv'n me what he took from the crowd?
My pen is my sceptre; my night-cap my crown,
All circled with laurels so comely and brown.
Nor am I so pow'rless as people may think:
For, lo! like all kings, I can spill floods—of ink;
Fight armies of mice, tear huge spiders at will,
And murder whole fleets with the point of a quill.
Wag the world as it list, I am still a queer *wag*;
And my noddle is full, though right hollow my bag.
No money I hoard up: for money is *dirt*;
And of *that* I've enough, very much to my hurt.
Yet should shillings hop in at some prosperous time,
They jingle so pretty, I keep them to chime.
Some sages may prate of their saws out of season,
And *reason* on matters without rhyme or *reason*,
But I'm no such pagan or infidel grown
To Providence thwart by odd schemes of my own;

And surely, grave signors, 'twould seem very odd,
For the *lord* of a garret to cross his *Lord* God.
No, no; he is just: not like poor earthly elves,
That scrape up from others to cover themselves;
Who treat the bare drudget of genius with laughter,
And labour so here sure they think no hereafter,—
For certainly clay-cumber'd logs, ever counting,
As Dominic has it, ' were ne'er made for mounting.'
" Here's a health then to Fate, and to Fortune her daughter
(Miss-fortune I mean), though I'm sorry 'tis water.
Yet water itself, sirs, may toast such a madam;
For 'twas wine, beer, and rum, in the fair days of Adam:
So why may not I then imagine it claret?
For his taste was as fine, as his son's in a garret."

The same sort of good-humoured easiness runs through the following letters; which at once prove the extreme poverty to which he was reduced, and the playful vivacity with which he could treat of it.

To the Rev. Mr. Berwick, Moira-house.

" Dear Sir,

" The swart star's influence is over me; for when you take the trouble of calling

on me, I am as much *non inventus* as if you were a bailiff's follower. Indeed I am not a fixed star myself, but a sort of beggarly meteor hovering here and there. I inclose some sprightly nonsense; yet sprightly as it is, it was composed with no very remarkable *gaieté de cœur*. If you do not think some parts too much bordering on John Dennis's wicked wit, I could wish you would let more than one see it. I have lately attempted an epithalamium on the marriage in your family, and an ode of thanks to lady Moira; which are not the worst of my lucubrations, at least I intended them for the best.

"I believe you had the *pleasure* of not remembering the *Pleasures* of Memory, which I long to see: I should also thank you very much for the loan of Peter Pindar, or any of Voltaire's works, for a few days, if you have them. To-morrow, if you have leisure to step over the Hellespont *

* This name Dermody gave to the river Liffey.

to Ellis's quay, I shall not be invisible: being, in the fashionable phrase, confined with a sprain in the ancle; but vulgarly, by not being fit to appear publicly in my present patriarchal garments, which might vie with the drapery of a stoic philosopher. Not having any crimson-caped squire gentlemanlike enough to convey this into the hands of your inflexible porter, I am obliged to put you to the expense of one penny; which, you will own, is more than the whole packet is worth.

"I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

"THOMAS DERMODY."

Inclosed in the above letter:

THE POET'S RECANTATION.

ADDRESSED TO MR. BERWICK.

"Facit *recantatio* versum *."

PUFF'D with false hopes of fame and honour,
My muse (the Philistines upon her!),

* "Facit indignatio versum." HORACE.

Stiff in her own bold *ipse dixit*,
Erst sent me out a true don Quixote;
Despising wealth, content, and pleasure,
For authorship's enchanted treasure:
Nor could the great Eliza's * kindness
Purge from my eye poetic blindness.
At last, well vers'd in cares and trouble,
I see my former folly double
(As Œdipus, with haggard eyes,
'Saw double suns and worlds arise;'
So Virgil, prince of epic fellows,
Is pleas'd in his ninth book to tell us);
And, startled at my faults and foibles,
Firm as if sworn on fifty Bibles,
Declare eternal hate, and lasting,
To lagging rhymes and paper-wasting.
Not Brutus did so much determine
To hunt from Rome the royal vermin.
Thus then, in a most furious fashion,
I write (not *read)* my recantation.

Imprimis (pray your godship, mind me),
Phœbus, I cast thee far behind me;
And all thy books, facete or tragic,
I look upon as spells or magic.

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* Countess of Moira.

In second place, I do combine
Body and blood against the Nine:
Ill-natur'd ballad-chanting slatterns;
That spoil'd my luck, and lost my patrons.

Lastly, *cum vi, et coram rege*,
I do, my reverend sir, engage ye,
To view a quill from goose or sparrow
As if it was a Parthian arrow,
Or William Tell's unerring dart,
Directly bouncing to my heart.
Neither shall ink or black or pallid,
(I *swear*, to make your trust more valid,)
For me in cup or bottle teem,
No more than Pluto's Stygian stream.
For ink's, I find by disquisition,
The very essence of perdition;
The gall was made for man's undoing,
And signs the bond 'twixt him and ruin.
And if, some time hence, sorely smit
By flashes of electric wit,
I should, in deep-designing malice,
Deal with the volume-vending tories *,
May Scandal plant his blackest gallows,
And hang me in his attic stories;

* "Tories" is here used merely as a term of reproach, in which sense it was first given to the political party now bearing this appellation. In its origin it is appropriate to robbers or freebooters; being derived from the native Irish *toree*, or "give me."

Where the grim-phyz'd Reviews exhibit
(Fell vaticides!) their ruthless gibbet.
Moreover, may the prince of priating
(You well may guess him by my hinting)
Roll up each page in sulphur-pills;
When from his stately chariot's wheels,
In doctor's semblance, he bestows
Disease and death where'er he goes.

Now, having made this adjuration,
I find there is some slight occasion
To seek some other method (knowing
The mouth must still be kept a-going)
By which, in lieu of rhymes unpleasant,
I may carouse with Port and pheasant;
While at my door, with hat in hand,
Vile bards (once brothers) shivering stand;
And, cursing me (a proud Egyptian),
Request his honour's least subscription.
O friend, whose goodness plac'd me once
Above the sneer of every dunce,
Above the scorn of fools well-drest,
In Hastings' generous bounty blest!
Once more her pitying heart assail
With youthful indiscretion's tale;
And bid, above the viler throng,
A princely patron grace my song.

So ends recant: by marv'lous care,
I've clench'd it with a poet's pray'r;

A kind of anti-scribbling matin,
To scare the fiends of Greek and Latin:—

From notes unpaid, that make us mourn;
From Marshalsea's close-grated bourn,
From whence no debtor can return;
From teasing countesses with letters,
And rash intrusion on our betters;
From Cambrian booksellers, who scrape or
Conceal all profits with a caper;
From shillings scant, that often send us
To tasteless lords;—good Lord, defend us!
But if it be thy will immortal,
Let Moira-house extend its portal;
Forgiving the ill-fated sinner,
And welcome Dermody to dinner:
And may he live at ease again,
Its bard for ever and—Amen.

To Mr. Raymond.

"My dear Sir,

"You will be amazed at my existence after so long a pause, but in this age of revolutions nothing can be wondered at. I should long since have intruded on you,

were my affairs in this world quite as elevated as they should be; but 'many a flower is born to blush unseen,' when stript of its leaves by the cold hand of Adversity. The gratitude I owe you is nevertheless an evergreen, and shall bud and ripen *ad infinitum*.

"I am at present in the venerable apparel of a stoic; and have been forced by the badness of my sandals (for shoes they are not) to sojourn at home while the whole universe is abroad, in as much secrecy and oblivion as the celebrated alchymist Duns Scotus. I have written a pamphlet on the present combustions, in a style of politics neither jejune nor inelegant; but how to print? 'that is the question.' Perchance you could, with your usual kindness, find me out a printer: I am pretty certain it would sell; indeed I am sure it would. It might probably *appropinquate* my fortune: at present my fortune, like Falstaff's honour, comes unlooked for if it comes at all. I am deter-

mined to set out for London, by hook or crook, as any delay in Ireland is dangerous: no such thing, in this gross atmosphere, as feeding on the flowers of fancy; simple water-cresses are more luxurious living.

"Yours sincerely,

"THOMAS DERMODY."

To Samuel White, Esq. Grafton-street.

"DEAR SIR,

"I TOOK the liberty of waiting on you last evening, but had not the pleasure of finding you at home. As I have some matters to consult your judgment on, I shall make bold on a further intrusion about eight this evening, if convenient to spare me a few moments.

"By turning over the leaf, you will find a worse attack than any; for after one prose letter, another in rhyme is too bad. Yet a very good comfort is this; poetry

burns every whit as well as any other species of composition, being a manufacture of a fiery and combustible matter. You will wonder at the carelessness of these lines; but on recollecting that sir Thomas More cracked jokes at the gibbet, and that great men have laughed very heartily on the rack, you will not be quite so much astonished. I am a miser of my misfortunes, and do not wish to spread the infection abroad.

"Have you seen the gentleman since who obligingly desired to see me? or do you think there are any hopes of my being introduced to the attention of Mr. Smith? If any influence can, yours I think must do it. After these varied importunities, I shall subscribe myself without hesitation (especially if you have the courage to peruse so far),

"Dear sir, your obliged and grateful

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"*Wood-street, May* 19, 1793."

Inclosed in the foregoing letter:

SOMETIMES, when Fate will let me smile,
I too can catch the sportive style;
Each meteor flash of humour try,
And point the sadly serious eye.
But, ah! full seldom can I break
Those clouds that hang on Musing's cheek;
Or, while new cares assault like lions,
Bid this vile spot—this world—defiance.
O happy thou who safe canst rove,
Studious, thine own Parnassian grove:
Or, as by meek-ey'd Peace you sit,
Cull each bright bloom of Attic wit;
And, with a hand well-judging, o'er
Your sweet song strew the splendid store!
Alas! can wretched wight presume,
When wrapt in melancholy gloom,
The winged stallion to bestride,
Or quaff the poet's hallow'd tide?
Can I, whom crosses diabolical
Have robb'd of pleasure, fire, and frolic all,
Enough to make old Momus grumble,
With miss Thalia romp and tumble?
No, no; 'tis quite too much, I swear,
With now a smile, and now a tear,
To fill the motley page: yet when I,
Sans patron, or a single penny,
Think on what your kind heart may do,
Still to the muse's interest true,—
Though of reflection I am weary,
And spite of rubs, I *will* be merry.

These mirthful humours however kept not long possession of his variable mind. At the approach of new calamities, reflection came; and for a while he gave himself up entirely to melancholy. His sentiments on these occasions were no less instructive and dignified, than in the opposite circumstances they were whimsical and penetrating.

" How vile to me this guilty globe appears!
One mass of falsehood through unnumber'd years.
Its paltry pleasures, vain and insecure,
What low-born visions, despicably poor!
Sometimes a puling virtue may be forc'd,
A strangled birth by pride or folly nurs'd;
A trampled flow'r which vice luxuriant breeds,
Soon to be smother'd by the rankest weeds.

" Nor think, O world! my fiercest song unjust:
Thy victims slumber in the silent dust.
Lo! venerable Dryden, urg'd to pay
Celestial tribute to some idol-clay,
For some small pittance strung his seraph lyre,
Of poesy the first majestic sire:
At length, deserted by each slave whose name
His magic planted on the brow of fame;

Deserted by each guest his mean abode,
By all deserted but 'th' inspiring God.*;'
Low on the earth his holy head he laid,
And his last glance confounded Vice dismay'd.

"Sweet as the shepherd's pipe my Otway sung,
And pity melted on his soothing tongue.
Yet mark his meed, too dreadful to be told!
Death clad in scorn, in penury, and cold.
His meek imploring eyes for ever close,
The Muse alone poor partner of his woes.

"Sweet Chatterton, prepar'd in early prime
The steepest paths of noblest verse to climb,
By felons spurn'd, illustriously died,
And view'd this curst epitome with pride.

"Ill-fated Savage! what could manhood bear
Of cruel want, of agony severe,
Of patient care that springs a silent mine;
What could it suffer, what, that was not thine?

"Ev'n now, when Taste pretends to spread her sway,
Behold the master of the wondrous lay,
In dauntless infancy a finish'd bard,
Despair his portion, prisons his reward!

* "Here like some furious prophet Pindar rode,
And seem'd to labour with th' inspiring God." Pope.

What though the fires which his mild breast supply
Blush o'er his cheek, and animate his eye?
What though Apollo's ev'ry charm he claim;
The song to tempt, the form to kindle flame;
The flowing strain to win the manly mind,
The beauteous air to catch the softer kind?
Still misery each fair perfection mars,
And the rude world with liberal nature wars."

And again:

"When first fair Fancy o'er my cradle smil'd,
Nurs'd the young thought, and fir'd her sleeping child,
Stream'd her aerial vision's fairy glow,
No warbled spell could chase the demon-woe *:
O'er the calm babe her baleful influence hung,
And tun'd to sad complaint his lisping tongue;
Though largely by the Muse's bounty blest,
My soul, in all her tuneful beauties drest,
Still doom'd to shine unprofitably bright,
A small star swallow'd in the gloom of night.
From my primeval bloom Misfortune's heir;
Unheard, unknown, baptiz'd in many a tear,
In many a tear whose precious drops supply
The silver sluice of Pity's dovelike eye!
Yet that I bore my mighty share of pain,
Undash'd, nor curs'd the soft seducive strain,

* "The demon-ape." Darwin.

This book can tell, memorial of my care,
And shews what dauntless infancy can dare;
And scenes severe what beamy bursts adorn,
Of varied life the bright and towering morn."

He was now reduced to the necessity of once more applying for relief to the countess of Moira. His personal applications, however, were *for the first time* disregarded; but her ladyship gave instructions to Mr. Mercier, an eminent bookseller, to print at her expence any of his literary productions that might be presented to him. This gentleman, on the present occasion, not only acted according to the secret orders given him by her ladyship, but, with much humanity, often from his own resources alleviated Dermody's misfortunes. The kind offer of his former benefactress was at this time of little current value to Dermody; who stood in immediate want of apparel to defend him from the inclemency of the weather, and of food to preserve him from perishing.

Seeing no fair hope or prospect arise to snatch him from approaching despair, he, in opposition to the strict commands of lady Moira, once more appealed to her feelings.

To the Right Honourable the Countess of Moira.

" My Lady,

" In the hour of hopeless distress, my only last plea must intrude on you, to whose goodness I entirely owe the former part of my existence. Spiritless, and overwhelmed by want, I am still labouring to perfect my studies for the college-examination, assured that any permanent happiness can arise from that quarter alone. During an uninterrupted series of almost two years, I have forgot much; the mind is debilitated by misfortunes, and requires some deliberation to recall the traces of ancient acquirements; however, where those acquirements have once been, they leave a

more than ordinary impression behind, and may with a little care be collected completely. I remember, your ladyship desired that any application from me should come through the hands of Mr. Mercier. That gentleman, to whose civility I am under many obligations, will testify to the assertion of my being in extreme distress, as he is particularly acquainted with my situation. I have therefore taken the liberty to contradict your ladyship's commands, innocently in this case. The procrastination of such an affair, would but ill agree with my present disagreeable circumstances. If your ladyship's usual benevolence would extend some slight immediate assistance, which might enable me to pursue my application to books with sufficient ardour, it would add one glory more to your heart, and imprint another prayer on the record of gratitude.

"I am, my lady, your grateful servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY."

To the Right Honourable the Countess of Moira.

"My Lady,

"This is the second letter I intrude on you unanswered. I entertained every idea of entering Dublin-college, but can find no means of supporting this intention. I therefore can remain in Dublin no longer, except to perish.

"I am, madam, your most grateful servant, Thomas Dermody."

To the Right Honourable the Countess of Moira.

"My Lady,

"Thankful for every former instance of your noble and truly generous favour, I cannot but wonder at receiving half-a-crown from that hand which has bestowed many guineas. I am at the same time more sincerely distressed at lady Moira's

uneasiness, than at Dermody's disappointment.

"I shall ever remain your ladyship's most grateful servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY."

Thus lost to the esteem of his friends, and cast off from the protection of his benevolent patroness, he had no other expedient to procure immediate relief than that which his genius afforded. The political hemisphere of Ireland being at this time strongly agitated by the early incidents of the revolution in France, Dermody conceived it a fortunate moment to display his talents in the support of those principles and enormities which convulsed almost the whole civilized world.

With the view therefore of reaping immediate fame and profit, he commenced politician; and, in direct opposition to the wishes and principles of his former patrons, published his opinions in a pamphlet en-

titled "The Rights of Justice, or Rational Liberty." The closing periods of this tract shew how strongly he could write on a subject with which, either from speculation or experience, he could then have been but little acquainted.

"POESY and painting could never boast such a divine subject as the dilapidation of the Bastille: where captivity groaned amid eternal darkness; where man was cast, like a demon, into central horrors; and where every moment lingered out was numbered and indented on the very soul. How glorious a theme for the pen, how expressive for the pencil, when the light of life and liberty burst on the gloomy dungeon; and affection called the wretched martyr from his trance of woe, with a voice musical as that of Heaven, to participate in the joys of his country, and hail the illustrious years approaching with promise of new felicities! It is impossible on such a topic

to be a cold philosopher: we are agitated by an ineffable transport; the heart feels equally with the head;

'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us.'

"Had Voltaire and Rousseau lived to this grand epoch, they would have died contented; to see the rights of man vindicated, to see their pen followed by the sword, would have been a foretaste of heaven. And yet this was but the first seed of that sacred virtue which has since risen to such an amazing height; which has overshadowed a whole nation; and which, like the ancient oracle of Dodona, has been consulted by all the world. Taste, like the morning star, foreruns that sun of knowledge which shall illumine the horizon of creation; dispersing those beams of intellectual radiance which flash on the monkish gloom of folly, and rousing the smothered scintillations of degraded humanity.

"The French are already beginning to evince a strength of reasoning before deemed incongruous with their national levity. They at this moment deal more in practice than theory: nevertheless Time, before he has advanced very far, shall receive a packet for Fame, in which Liberty and her sister Revolution shall inform the world, that France is a second Rome, more glorious than the first; mistress of every elegant art, nurse of heroism, and invincible on the rock of union."

To this pamphlet he subjoined a well-written poem, which he entitled The Reform. As a poetical composition, it was much read and highly esteemed; and the reader will no doubt be gratified with the following extract, which concludes the poem and his political adventures.

"My suffering countrymen, why rusts the sword,
Why sinks the palsied arm, why droops the breast,
In mute inglorious bondage?—When the flag

Of Liberty exultant waves around,
And Conquest beckons from her rapid car
Triumphal, shall the sons of Erin droop,
Slaves, slaves alone, amid the unfetter'd world;
Its chain dissolv'd by that etherial touch
Whose spark electric rous'd the trifling Gaul
To the loud trumpet from his regal toys?
Dishonour waits, with murky brand to stamp
Your names disgraceful on her blackest page.
She waits: oh! catch the moment; kindling catch
The dear divine occasion; wrest her hand,
And plant the bright record of glory there."

The trifle which he received for his political labours, was very disproportionate to the toil and anxiety they cost him; and his printer also deriving but little profit from them, declined entering into new speculations where the expence was certain and the return precarious. His open avowal of those revolutionary sentiments which in a few years afterwards so deeply pervaded the breasts of the misguided peasantry of Ireland; and ultimately led them to commit such dreadful outrages on social order,

and to participate in scenes of rebellious slaughter; banished entirely the lingering sparks of affection and good-will towards him which many of his friends still retained, and which on any proper occasion would have been applied to promote his interest and happiness. His state became now so desperate, that without much scruple he would have undertaken to defend or promote any cause which promised to afford the least immediate supply. From distress, not principle, he became a revolutionist: and when he found that his greatest exertions to support his newly adopted doctrines could procure him only the subsistence of a few days, he calmly abandoned the projects which he had conceived were speedily to raise him to fame and fortune, and returned to the steady course of loyalty in the character of a humble but faithful supporter of his country's honour; for he soon became a soldier, and on the shores of France and Hol-

land received in her defence many honourable scars.—But this is anticipating the regular course of his history.

Being reduced by his imprudence, from an enviable state of ease and contentment where respect and admiration attended him, to the most lamentable which man can endure, he retired to his miserable habitation with a mind tortured by all the anxieties which contempt and approaching famine could inflict; and resolved to shut himself up from society till his errors were forgotten, or his genius should procure him new friends. He was soon however forced to abandon this resolution, and to sink the elevated spirit of the poet in the meaner importunities of distress; and adopted a method which neither the recollection of past sufferings, nor the weight of new calamities, could justify. This was that of inclosing mean petitions to persons of rank, for the purpose of exciting their compassion and extorting their benevolence. With some whose hearts were open

to the distresses of their fellow-creatures, and whose taste and judgment could discover the true and dignified sparks of native genius, such appeals had the effect of procuring him immediate relief; while others looked upon them as the common cant and artifices of an impostor, and without much feeling or consideration returned the letters unopened.

His condition now became insupportable; and he reflected on it with a poignancy which, but for a sudden and unexpected relief, must inevitably have brought him to a speedy dissolution. Convinced that he partly merited this painful reverse of fortune, he formed the resolution to submit to it with some degree of fortitude. He accordingly confined himself for several days in a wretched garret, without receiving the least nourishment; and provided with no other accommodation than a miserable pallet of straw, and a tattered blanket which he frequently used as a

curtain to shelter him from the wind and rain that assailed him through the crevices of a latticed roof. From this state of despondency however he was soon relieved by the benevolence of the late lord-chief-justice Kilwarden, then attorney-general for Ireland; a nobleman who, in a recent attempt made by a band of traitors to overthrow the constitution of their country, fell an innocent sacrifice to the outrageous fury of a mob of barbarians the most bloody and ferocious that ever dishonoured a free nation.

The attorney-general, being informed by his bookseller that a panegyric possessing many poetical beauties had been addressed to him and printed in the Anthologia Hibernica, had the curiosity to make some inquiries relative to the author; and Mr. Mercier (who has been before mentioned), conceiving this a favourable opportunity to do him a further kindness, recommended him with all the ardour of humanity, as

an object worthy of protection. Recommendations of this nature were seldom neglected by this amiable and much-lamented character, and the case of Dermody became his particular care. He did not wait for the cold forms of ceremonious introduction; but with the enthusiastic glow of true benevolence, entered the habitation of misery, to give comfort and relief to the suffering object of his inquiries.

The introduction was as extraordinary and unexpected to poor Dermody, as it was pleasing to him. It was his custom when adverse circumstances obliged him to remain any considerable time in his forlorn dwelling, to read away the morning in bed. Some favourite author was thus generally his companion till noon; when he rose, and employed the remainder of his time in the society of the muses. It is true, they could sometimes delight him through the tedious day; but,

like false unfeeling friends, they forsook him at the approach of distress. Night came, and with it hunger and reflection. It may easily be supposed what were his feelings under such accumulated calamity; the perplexities of a disquieted mind, the *near* prospect of famine, and the *distant* one of relief, made the hours allotted for repose, uneasy and intolerable.—Such was his situation when he was surprised by the unexpected visit of the attorney-general. He had risen from his truckle-bed; and was in the act of decorating himself, not with the gaudy and fashionable habiliments of the day, but with the ancient and thread-bare garments of decayed taste: his waist and limbs incommodiously covered with solemn black, the colour and emblem of his fortune; and his arms and body parsimoniously clad with green:—when a chariot stopped at the door, attended by a servant in livery who vociferously demanded entrance. The honest people of the house,

unused to such alarms, had not at first sufficient courage to open the door, and answer the interrogatories that were put to them. The attorney-general, impatient to behold him whom he sought, quitted his carriage, and ascended directly to the attic retirement of Dermody. It is needless to say that he had the sensibility to feel and relieve his distresses: he heard his story; and being convinced that he possessed the modest simplicity of true genius, insisted upon his going in the carriage to dine with him. This proffered honour Dermody conceived a worse evil than even his afflicting solitude and poverty: he paused, hesitated, said his appearance was unfit, and tried to apologize; but his new patron, though he respected his feelings, answered that the garb of wretchedness in such a case was an honourable one, and hurried him into the chariot.

Dermody had the peculiar power of engaging almost every one in his favour who

conversed with him, by a pleasing diffidence, a natural modesty, which never forsook him but when ensnared by intoxication. He was not forward in discourse; and his qualifications were rather extorted from him, than presumptuously displayed to attract the admiration of his patrons. This behaviour was highly pleasing to the attorney-general, who entered at once into his interest with all the fervour of true generosity. His admiration, however, proved nearly fatal to Dermody at the first interview. Unused to the voluptuous banquets of the great, and of late long accustomed to drink only of the pure spring, he suddenly felt the force of his patron's hospitality. The enchanting juice of the grape began to operate, and in a short time he was rendered incapable of conversation. The carriage was now ordered to the door, and he was insensibly conveyed back to his own residence. Sleep buried the remembrance of this latter circumstance, and the

following day was ushered in by the most pleasing ideas of past felicity. He recollected that he had been transported to a splendid mansion, and that he partook largely of the fascinating luxuries of the season; but he knew nothing perfectly. It was a pleasing confusion of intellect, a chaos of momentary delight, that lasted only till reflection came. He was now raised to a degree of rapturous astonishment by the sudden discovery of a purse in the corner of his pocket, containing five guineas, which had been providently placed there on his return home by his kind host. However, he was not long permitted to enjoy these pleasurable sensations; his reflections being suddenly interrupted by a message from the attorney-general, desiring his attendance at a particular hour. The charm was now dispelled; he was roused from his reverie, and trembled at the consequences of his imprudence: but was for the moment happily relieved by a

second messenger, who delivered the following note:

"THE attorney-general's compliments to Mr. Dermody: is under the necessity of going out of town immediately; but will request the favour of seeing him the first day the attorney-general comes to town, of which he will give Mr. Dermody notice.

"*Nassau-street, March 19th, 1793.*"

Nothing however was mentioned relative to the unfortunate incident, at their next meeting. The attorney-general, pleased with the discovery which he had made, adopted measures for the comfort and welfare of his new-found poet, and continued to be his generous protector and friend as long as prudence admitted of such patronage. Dermody for a time attended to the kind admonitions of his benefactor, and was regarded by him as a distinguished and extraordinary character. This gentleman's

affection for the unfortunate youth was such, that he actually engaged apartments for him in the college; and promised to furnish them in a commodious manner, defray the whole of his expences there, and allow him thirty pounds a year in order that he might appear in the world with comfort and respectability. Here was a glorious opportunity for Dermody to regain his character in society, and to stand forth with redoubled lustre the object of admiration. But what will be said or thought of him when it is told that, regardless of consequences, and blind to the prospects of permanent felicity, he chose rather to continue in mean obscurity, than to accept the liberal proposal of his benefactor?

To abandon the proffered gifts of fortune when strong experience, repeated disappointment, and extreme distress, had so deeply taught him to value them, was surely extraordinary and unaccountable. It may appear from the following note to Mr.

Mercier, that he had acquainted that gentleman with his reasons for rejecting the generous offer of the attorney-general: but at all events the hints given in the letter to his patron subjoined are certainly insufficient to warrant such singular conduct; particularly when he had no better prospect, but must again encounter a formidable train of unpropitious circumstances.

To Mr. Mercier.

"SIR,

"I INCLOSE this letter to the attorney-general open, that you may perceive what I meant this morning. I hope you will let him have it at the next interview, nor acquaint him with some particulars of my last discourse which were the effects of disappointment.

"I am sincerely your obliged humble servant, THOMAS DERMODY."

To the Right Honourable the Attorney General.

"SIR,

"I HAD the honour of receiving your answer from Mr. Mercier this morning, with more regret than surprise, being conscious that my application must in your sight have appeared very presuming; however, I had some hopes that your own feelings would extenuate an impropriety which was the desperate result of immediate and unavoidable distresses. I need not painfully enumerate the embarrassments that surround me at present: your own discernment, sir, will inform you that a person in my situation cannot exist without encountering them. It were the vilest ingratitude not to acknowledge the extraordinary liberality of your proposal; nevertheless I may take the liberty to affirm that it is, in such circumstances, but pointing out a palace to a wretch just drowning. A strange fatality has ever attended my determina-

tions; they have been shadowed by some neglect of my own, or perverted by the assiduous malice of others: yet were the secret movements of all my actions, which to the unpitying world appear so indiscreet, but minutely examined, those very actions would have been found venial. It being plain that to study amid misfortune is as impracticable as to study in the tempest, I am forced to forego your generous offer, so honourable to me and so worthy of yourself, until some period when fortune may remove the obstructions to my happiness.

"I am, sir, with the greatest respect, your ever-grateful humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY."

This fortunate period, however, did not arrive: nor were "the obstructions to his happiness" ever completely removed through his short but eventful life; though opportunities often occurred, and were as

often seconded by the exertions of powerful friends. It may be thought by many, that, after declining such benefits, he merited whatever mischance might befall him in his future progress through life: yet it can be said, in palliation of this act of folly, that he made use of no hypocritical stratagem to secure a continuance of patronage, nor committed any daring enormity to forfeit it; but with an honest freedom relinquished the obligations which he could not enjoy with satisfaction to his benefactor, or comfort, honour, and security, to himself.

Fully sensible of the advantages which he had thus lost, he again retired to his obscurity, and relied solely for a subsistence on the accidental efforts of the few friends who were acquainted with his situation. These sometimes favoured him with their assistance, but oftener left him in hunger to ruminate on his past follies. Being accustomed to live upon expedients, habit

by this time had a little blunted his sensibility; and he would wander among the fields by day, or regale himself in the evening in the chimney-corner of a public-house, without feeling much pain from reflection, or inconvenience from poverty. He had his particular moments of reflection and reserved sobriety, and his stated fits of unlimited intemperance. The allurements of folly could not draw him from his humble retreat; nor the prospect of advancement, or hope of affluence, from his low propensities. He was as singularly eager in the pursuit of pleasure, as indolent in providing for his wants. Money was seldom esteemed by him but when he wanted to prolong his enjoyments; and the diminution of his finances at such a moment created only a temporary uneasiness, which was soon dispelled by the happy expectation of being enabled to renew his pleasures. When his mind was disgusted by the ignorance and frivolity of his asso-

ciates, or his appetite satiated by intoxication, he would retire to his solitude, and wholly resign himself to despair. This inconsistency of disposition was not, however, without its advantage; as it made him feel and lament his imprudence, and guarded him against a total aberration from propriety and moral rectitude. When his passions were cooled, and his sober judgment was allowed to regain its sway, he gave vent to his feelings in strains like the following.

"Dear enviable scene of infant joy,
When life's first dawn (now gloom'd in many a storm!)
Beam'd in mild lustre on the Muse's boy,
Ting'd his fresh cheek, and strung his nervous form,
Farewel!—nor, oh! let memory's busy breast
Recall (sad change!) the hour when I was blest.

"Now dark-brow'd Care, now Sorrow's beamless eye,
Now frowning Fortune, mock the promis'd bloom.
In hideous wreck the shatter'd fragments lie;
Ends the dire prospect in the op'ning tomb:
Secure retreat! a black but friendly shore;
Where sorrow sleeps, and feeling is no more."

Or more strongly in these lines:

"Me, hapless youth! the fury Troubles tear!
Me from the Muse's rosy bosom wean.
Dim streams my glance o'er sorrow's dreary scene:
Dark to my sight Parnassian charms appear;
Damp'd each bold ardour, each enthusiast fire:
Sad-weeping o'er my song all-pensive laid;
Or haply, rous'd from lethargies of woe,
Still by new forms more terrible dismay'd;
Harsh-featur'd Penury and cares combin'd,
Tearing with tiger-fang my tortur'd mind."

At another time he would spurn reflection, and appear as mirthful and unconcerned as if he had not been surrounded with difficulties. As he was more suddenly than others depressed by calamity, so could he with greater facility disentangle himself from perplexity. Mirth and sorrow, competence and poverty, rage and temperance, feeling and remorse, vanity and meanness, pride and insolence, would each quickly take its turn: and were equally welcome guests; even when he knew that to indulge them would be a painful sacrifice of happiness, propriety,

and reason. But it must be added that they were productive of no bad consequences to any other individual. He employed them as self-tormentors, and made them pleasing or destructive to himself alone. As he on all occasions committed his thoughts to paper, the sudden transitions of his mind are more accurately expressed by himself than they could possibly be by any biographer; which circumstance will, it is hoped, be a sufficient excuse for introducing in this narrative so many unconnected pieces and extracts from his writings. They are the effusions of an alternately calm and disordered imagination; and are therefore to be considered as so many records of his history. The following is inserted for the purpose of merely shewing how easily he could at times be drawn from his melancholy.

THE PETITION OF TOM DERMODY, TO THE THREE FATES IN COUNCIL SITTING.

"RIGHT rigorous, and so forth! humbled
By cares and mournings, tost and tumbled,
Before your ladyships Tom Fool,
Knowing above the roast you rule,
Most lamentably sets his case,
With a bold heart and saucy face.
Sans shoe or stocking, coat or breeches,
You see him now, most mighty witches:
His body worn like an old farthing,
The angry spirit just a-parting;
His credit rotten, and his purse
As empty as a cobler's curse;
His poems too unsold,—that's worse!
In short, between confounded crosses,
Patrons all vex'd, and former losses,
Sure as a gun he cannot fail
Next week to warble in a jail:
Which jail to folks not very sanguine
Is just as good, or worse than hanging;
Though in the first some vain hopes flatter,
But Hope's quite *strangled* by the latter.
Thus is poor rhyming rascal treated;
Fairly, or rather foully, cheated
Of all the goods from wit accruing
(Wit, that's synonimous with ruin).
Then take it in your head-piece, ladies,
To set up a poor bard whose trade is

Low-fall'n enough in conscience: pity
The master of the magic ditty;
And turn your wheel once more in haste,
To see him on the summit plac'd.
For well you wot that woes ('od rot 'em!)
Have long time stretch'd him at the bottom:
Where he who erst fine lyrics gabbled,
With mire and filth was sorely dabbled;
So pitifully pelted that
He looks like any drowned rat.
O Justice, Justice! take his part;
Oh! lift him in thy lofty cart,
Magnific Fame; and let fat Plenty
Marry one poet out of twenty."

The experience that he had now so dearly purchased, and the many variable and extraordinary scenes through which he had passed, added to a comprehensive understanding and an enlarged knowledge of mankind, taught him to judge of events, and to remark the passing scenes of the world, with much accuracy; and as he had with a just perspicacity contemplated man through all the vicissitudes of life, he generally received some immediate though not permanent benefit from his

speculations. The foibles of the giddy great furnished him, for a considerable time, with his daily subsistence. With no other knowledge of them than what a newspaper or magazine afforded, he has often so far affected their credulity, seduced their reason, flattered their vanity, or excited their compassion, as to procure a speedy supply to his necessities; his finances being generally exhausted before he adopted this expedient. It cannot however be supposed that he was always a successful supplicant: he was sometimes repulsed with a contempt which only the vain superiority of fortune could prompt or justify; and such mortifications were rendered doubly aggravating, from the recollection that he had come so far to receive them. When his case was desperate, and the cravings of hunger grew too peremptory to admit of longer abstinence, he would frequently without either shoes or stockings, or (at the best) but badly accommo-

dated in that respect, wander into the country fifteen or twenty miles, to the seat of some nobleman or person of fortune, for the purpose of merely presenting a copy of verses. Being doubtful of success in such cases, he generally approached with fear and reluctance. He was sometimes received with kindness; but oftener driven from the gate, when he was probably faint and sinking with hunger and fatigue. It cannot but be imagined that a subsistence so casual was productive of much painful inconvenience and perplexity. When he had been thus unfeelingly repelled from the doors of the great, he would seek a refuge in the corner of a shed or uninhabited hut, give vent to his wounded feelings in a flood of tears, and then proceed on his journey homeward till he arrived at some mean inn or public-house, where the narrative of his distress was sure to procure him the best entertainment his poor host could afford.

When he returned from an unsuccessful excursion of this kind, he would seldom venture to face the landlord of his lodging, whose unfeeling importunities often urged him to undertake the journey; but would wander through the streets during the night, sometimes sheltering himself from the inclemency of the weather under a gateway or in a night-house. On other occasions he would assume a courage, and boldly approach his habitation: but as soon as he had reached the door or staircase his spirit would fail him; and ascending with silence and eager haste to his attic retirement, he would shut himself up even from the strict search of the few friends who in almost every emergency still continued to advise and assist him. The reproach of a friend, indeed, was what he dreaded most: it gave him particular pain; and he generally took this method to avoid it, by which means he often lost the good-

will of many for committing no other fault than merely absenting himself.

When his good-fortune prevailed, he set no bounds to what he called his happy frolics; of which the following is one instance.—Having, in a very distressed condition, concealed himself some days in his apartment without receiving any relief, he resolved to visit Mr. Grattan at his seat in the county of Wicklow, about fifteen miles from Dublin; and as that gentleman never yet closed his doors against the unfortunate, Dermody was certain of a good reception. Mr. Grattan treated him with kindness and respect, and at his departure presented him with five guineas. Dermody, conceiving that the next day might be as fortunate as the present, and disdaining to portion out this sum for his immediate, or preserve it for future necessities, found means to spend the whole before he reached his lodgings; which he did about midnight, and in a condition more fit to be conceived

than described. Resolving that those who knew he was often miserable should likewise know that he was sometimes happy, and eager to relate the happy occurrence, he sallied forth at this hour to rouse his associates, and inform them of his good fortune; but finding several of their houses guarded by the police, who were averse to his clamorous salutations, he determined upon assailing the writer of these Memoirs, who then lived at the retired village of Ranelagh, three miles from the capital. The uncomeliness of his apparel, contrasted with the severity of the weather; the unsteadiness of his body, rendered interesting by the marks of the many falls and wounds he had received in forcing his way through the hedges; and the strong operation of the liquor of which he had so freely partaken; gave him altogether a most extraordinary appearance. In this condition he arrived at the peaceable village of Ranelagh, about three in the morning: when with

such stones as he could collect he attacked the solitary habitation of the author; who, being accustomed to enjoy in quiet his hours of rest, and perhaps less subject to alarm than his watchful neighbours, was not made acquainted with the circumstances of the assault till Dermody had demolished several windows, frightened the guardians of an adjoining nunnery, roused the whole hamlet, and was fast in the custody of the inhabitants. The author had influence enough to get him released from the officers of the watch; who by this time had arrived, and were proceeding to violent extremities in order to subdue their antagonist. A trifling sum pacified their rage: and with a little assistance from them, Dermody was carefully corded down upon an empty bed; where in a short time his passion subsided, and he fell into a profound sleep. The village and adjoining nunnery being thus again restored to tranquillity, the watchmen

sought their different stations, and the inhabitants retired to rest.

Had this circumstance occurred to one less interested in his welfare and general happiness, the recollection of it might have occasioned some pain to Dermody; but happening as it did, it was productive of no other consequence than a friendly admonition, which was not always received with the attention it merited. Arraigned by the partial friend more frequently than by the rigid judge; who could more easily too persuade himself to forget than punish such errors, and sought for few proofs to be convinced that disappointment more than a natural propensity to err caused these indiscretions; he was little fearful of a harsh rebuke, and seldom dreaded a severe resentment. This partiality was less eminently conspicuous in the author, than in others who besides possessed greater means to render their favour profitable: but by none was it more generously displayed than

by Mr. Emerson, and the present honourable baron Smith; the father of which latter gentleman (the right honourable the master of the rolls) was equally inclined to countenance Dermody, and rescue him from the chilling influence of penury. Mr. Smith, jun. was at this time studying the profession of the law; and qualifying himself for the dignified station he has since been called upon to fill, and which he now so honourably holds.

It is of no consequence whether Dermody owed his first introduction to Mr. Smith, to the kindness of Mr. Emerson, or to the casual insertion of the following poem in the Anthologia Hibernica. Both these gentlemen were his warm and distinguished friends, and laboured with equal zeal and anxiety to render their esteem permanently beneficial to him.

TO WILLIAM SMITH, ESQ. AUTHOR OF "THE PATRIOT."*

Tanti mensuram nominis imples. OVID.

"PATRIOT! to thee I lift th' applausive lay,
As the bold eaglet wooes the glance of day,
Sails on the noon-beam, and with borrow'd force
Ascends undazzled to the quenchless source.
Nor I alone the votive transport breathe:
Nor I alone entwine the civic wreath:
Lo! while thy precepts, mildly firm, improve,
A grateful people pay thee with their love.
Scarce thy own Burke a nobler page could frame,
Though Learning's hand anneals his sacred name;
Though truth beams forth from every polish'd line;
And, loftiest plac'd on Wisdom's cloudless shrine,
While Peace exults, and prowling Faction dies,
From Envy far th' illumin'd record lies.
Thus through thy loyal page serenely glows,
The temper'd freedom prosperous Britain knows:
Bids meteor popularity retire,
And kindles in its room the *patriot*'s fire;
Bids the fair olive, late-reviving, spread
Its leafy egis o'er a nation's head:—

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* A collection of political essays, written by Mr. Smith in the year 1792.

A nation oft to lawless rage a prey;
Still prompt to mingle in the causeless fray;
Still by each rebel's empty cry beguil'd
(In noise a vet'ran, eloquence a child)
Who 'mid the havoc of the world would tear
Some trophy, that but gives his crimes t' appear;
And, in the radiant plunder of a throne,
Ungem a monarch's head, to deck his own.

" O patriot sage! sure some celestial dream
Press'd on thy gifted soul the awful theme;
Ere yet events, to every ken unfurl'd,
Had taught the full-grown mischiefs to the world *,
Some Pow'r humane, 'commercing with the sky,'
Op'd the fell scene to thy prophetic eye;
Where by barbarians slaughter'd Justice lay,
And the loud rabble claim'd unhallow'd sway;
Her bleeding breast where frighted Peace conceal'd,
And waning Plenty left th' unfurrow'd field;
While o'er the blood-stain'd base of public woes,
Pillar'd on death, the *grand republic* rose.

" Thy bold design my verse in vain pursues:
Let Faction's sons grow docile, and peruse,
While droops with flagging wing th' unequal muse.

* Alluding to different presaging numbers of the Patriot.

For 'mid thy grateful country's general choir,
Alas! too feebly sounds my trembling wire.
Convert to thee, suffice it that I kneel:
Where fails the poet, let the convert feel!

"THOMAS DERMODY."

Mr. Smith disclaimed the proud title of patron. He made no pompous display of his generosity. It was the silent and noble exertion of a benevolent mind, which received its gratification from being considered only as a friend and counsellor: and as he at all times received him with a kind and unreserved freedom, Dermody became more particularly attached to this gentleman; and paid a more respectful regard to his advice than to that of many others who entertained probably an equal inclination to befriend him, but who had a less affectionate method of shewing their esteem. But the answer to the epistle here inserted will more fully illustrate the character of Mr. Smith, whose dignified generosity will appear amiably conspicuous in another part of this history.

TO WILLIAM SMITH, ESQ.

" O THOU within whose splendid mind
The gem of genius glows refin'd;
And, like the sun, with partial ray
Flings a fond lustre o'er my lay!
May I (on whose calm cradle frown'd
The Fates; while pitying wept around
The gentler Nine, and view'd beneath
Grim Dulness tread on Fancy's wreath)
May I, 'mid grief's severest storm,
Assume Mirth's laughter-loving form,
And dress with flow'rs (ah, cruel art!)
The thorn that festers in my heart?
Pity with melting eye will trace
The lines which shame and pride erase
(True pride, without whose noble flame
The poet scarce deserves his name);
And from thy feeling breast of fire,
One spark illume the silent lyre.
So Memnon's statue, as it caught
The beam of heav'n, erst kindled into thought.

" Now then (since I must change my style,
Beaming through tears an April smile;
And 'mid the sullen gloom of crape, or
Congenial cyprus, cut a caper),
That I am oft and sundry times
More scant of shillings than of rhymes,

Sic visum superis it seems,
Who only give me golden—*dreams*.
And though Hope's fairy finger mark
Out future purses in the dark,
Yet stern Distress, a rogue unpleasant,
Like bailiff stands to point the present.
In short, as certain beasts I fare:
Wild asses; who regale on air,
While their tame brothers (who discover
Nor sense nor taste) carouse in clover.
Meet seems it therefore, I presume,
If you would wish my bays should bloom
Beyond the Attic or Egyptian,
To tax this nation with subscription.
This nation sure, so monstrous ready
To pension foreign wit when *seedy*,
Can scarcely vent a miser-groan
To nurse a bantling of its own;
And sooth to say (sooth may be said),
This bantling's better taught than fed.
Meantime some slighter aid might nerve
My soul that bounty to deserve:
Might keep gaunt musing from the door;
While secret, silent, and secure,
Those lofty trifles I transcribe
Which charmed once without a bribe.

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"*P. S.* No prose shall I presume to add;
This rhyme's enough—to make you mad."

To Mr. Dermody, No. 3, Wood-street, White Friars.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE just been reading over the lines you did me the honour of addressing to me; and am concerned to trace through them that distressed state which one is sorry to find cramping the efforts of genius, but with which I had been already in some degree acquainted by your good and my very esteemed friend Mr. Emerson. I will in all my endeavours to do you that service which I am very well inclined to do, be (if I may so express it) ministerial to him; for he has assumed the honourable task (and it is a *very* honourable one) of alleviating the present difficulties, and promoting the future ease and independance, of a person of undoubted genius. But though I will not so step forward as to strip him of the satisfaction which he will derive from seeing his efforts in your favour successful,

yet with him I shall most cordially conspire; and do for your benefit every thing which my slender means, and still slenderer interest, can achieve in your favour. I should like to talk freely over your situation, without reserve; as in the course of such conversation I may gather some hint of what could be done towards your permanent advantage. Perhaps you can come over for this purpose, and breakfast with me to-morrow; if you have no objection to so late an hour as half past ten. In the mean time I beg you to alleviate any uneasy sense which you may have of your situation, by indulging a firm persuasion that while I find you a man of worth and honour (which I believe you to be), I shall very uniformly be your friend. In Mr. Emerson's attachment you have acquired much: I do not know any man of whom I have a better opinion.

"I am, dear sir, with esteem, your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM SMITH."

"*Hume-street, December 15th*, 1793."

So fair a prospect opened on the view of any other person than Dermody, would have been hailed as the propitious omen of future enjoyment and felicity. Indeed even by him it was for a time considered as a happy occurrence; but having been previously involved in difficulties too complicated for him to be suddenly relieved from them, and conceiving that a full and candid disclosure of his circumstances might act too forcibly on the feelings and liberality of the friend who had so honourably engaged to assist him, he concealed his real condition, and was consequently deprived of the undiminished effect of Mr. Smith's disinterested generosity. This is delicately hinted at in the following letter.

To Mr. Emerson.

"DEAR SIR,

"WERE I not assured that your taste and judgment have raised your sentiments far above the low misapprehension of common

minds, I should sooner suffer any distresses in silence than risk this address to your usual goodness. Though at once distinguished and benefited by the liberal invitations of Mr. Smith, I am not so totally destitute of sensibility as to trespass on them too much; and therefore must of consequence undergo little difficulties, rather than presume on frequent intrusion. Without one friend who would supply those trifling necessities which do not so much attract public notice as they occasion private uneasiness, I am often indeed obliged to despair in my pursuits, and wish for an end of an existence prolonged only for new trials. Distressed even by the very trifle which I must pay for my lodging, I am forced to form apologies opposite to my nature, or incur the stigma of that poverty which is never more keen than when exposed to the aggravation of low and ignorant people. These matters I mention that you may perceive it full time to promote any

subscription you may have formerly planned in my behalf; as a very small assistance would enable me to escape from the dull hindrances of such a state, where the fancy is debilitated and study interrupted. To expedite the performance of this proposal the more speedily, I presume it would be best to have some specimens printed, and the matter set on foot as soon as convenient.

"And now, after requesting that pardon I have forfeited by the impertinence of these lines, I beg you will not mention one syllable of this address to Mr. Smith, for many reasons which will I think occur to your own penetration; and I also wish that if you should do me the honour of an answer, it may be either in private or on paper.

"I am, with most grateful respect, your ever-obliged

"THOMAS DERMODY."

"*No. 3, Wood-street.*"

This union of power and inclination to rescue him from his difficulties, would have been productive of much happiness, had he had wisdom to distinguish the just motives of his friends, and set a proper value on their advice. But heedless of consequences, and fearful lest he should be considered as a burden to those whom he esteemed, he let the favourable opportunity pass which so flatteringly promised comfort and independance. Strange as it may appear, in a short time after, without giving the least previous intimation, he retired from the notice of these gentlemen, who were so sedulously labouring to advance his fortune; and, as if his evil Genius was still predominant, abandoned himself to the most depraved society, whose pursuits and enjoyments were both disreputable and pernicious. Lost to the esteem of the world, and deserted even by many of his low associates, he wandered about for some weeks without having any settled habita-

tion, or any other means of subsistence than the casual donations which his wretched appearance extorted from the humanity of those to whom he presented mean petitions. Lamentable as his state was, and wild and inconsistent as such an idea may be thought, he at this time formed the plan of visiting London.

Being fixed in his resolution he invoked his Muse, who never deserted him; and thus sings to the adopted companion of his journey.

ON OUR DEPARTURE FOR LONDON.

"Dear Stewart! for London now happily bound,
For a while we are free from that damnable ground
Where merit is spurned, where virtue is lost,
And invention chok'd up with Hibernian frost.
So bidding farewell to each opulent rogue
Who murder'd our hearing with nonsense and brogue,
We go, the pure air of the muses to breathe,
And smile at dull envy and malice beneath.
Like birds, sir, of passage, from dullness we fly,
To warble and wing in a far brighter sky:

Where freedom and fancy are sweetly combin'd,
Where the body too feels the fine glow of the mind;
Where bounty, the sun of perfection, will blaze,
And ripen at once the full grape and the bays;
Where fortune and genius in amity shine,
And the true spark of poesy beams forth divine;
In short, where no son of St. Patrick shall dare,
With a foul-mouthed huff, and a swaggering air,
Meek wisdom so gentle to thrust from the wall.—
Then welcome misfortune! we rise from our fall:
At least, we are certain to suffer no curse;
We here were neglected,—they can't use us worse."

And more feelingly in the following.

FAREWELL TO IRELAND.

"RANK nurse of nonsense; on whose thankless coast
The base weed thrives, the nobler bloom is lost:
Parent of pride and poverty, where dwell
Dullness and brogue and calumny:—farewel!
Lo! from thy land the tuneful prophet flies,
And spurns the dust behind in folly's eyes.
Merit, bright meteor, o'er thy gloomy night
Stream'd of poetic charm the loveliest light;
Dim'd by thy mist, and shorn of many a ray,
The brilliant glory bursts, and glides away,
In purer skies to shed its radiant glow,
And leaves a lonely waste of gloom below.

In vain thy children tun'd the lofty strain;
Thy children propp'd the sinking isle in vain:
Vice is well-pension'd, virtue seeks the shades,
And all the muse and all the patriot fades.
No Moira comes to clear thy circling fogs,
But Westmorland still rules congenial bogs.'

" Yet ere my better fortune fills the sail,
Ere fav'ring zephyr fans the speeding gale;
While tears by turns, and angry curses, rend
This injur'd breast; inglorious spot, attend
(For spite of anger, spite of satire's thrill,
Nature boils o'er; thou art my country still).
Oh! pause on ruin's steepy cliff profound:
Oh! raise thy pale, thy drooping sons around;
Exalt the poor, the lordly proud oppress,
Thy tyrants humble, but thy soldiers bless.
Worn by long toil, as if foredoom'd by fate
To glut some pamper'd reprobate of state,
Thy artists cherish; bid the mighty soul
Of wisdom range beyond cold want's control;
And haply when some native gem you see
Unknown, unfriended, lost,—oh, think on ME *!"

Having been delayed some days, either by adverse winds or by the hope of procur-

* It was peculiarly ungrateful in Dermody to speak in these terms respecting his native country. He received in fact too much friendship, too much patronage.

ing money to enable him to prosecute his journey, he began to reflect on the folly of such an enterprise; and would undoubtedly have abandoned it had he given himself time to deliberate on the wildness of the project, and the uncertainty of its success. Eager however in what he weakly termed the pursuit of fame, and impatient to behold new objects, he spurned the sober dictates of reason; and hurried to his companion, whom he found at a mean public-house in Great George-street. This house was the rendezvous of a recruiting party; and Dermody's appearance being little above the level of the rest of the company, he was soon requested to partake of their amusements. The temptation was not to be resisted; and inclination joining with opportunity, he was easily seduced from propriety. He mixed in their low excesses; became speedily intoxicated: and being inveigled from the door by the serjeant, was seized by a party who lay in ambush to receive him; and was the same

night carried down the river, and safely lodged in a tender which lay moored in the bay.

Thus were all his visionary scenes of bliss, his high-concerted plans, his hopes, at once destroyed; nor could the evil which he had thus incautiously brought upon himself, be easily remedied. Remonstrances were vain with those whom he had now to deal with: they benefited too largely by his folly, to resign their prey without a handsome recompence; which it was not now in Dermody's power to give. Shut up in a vessel, closely guarded, and denied the least communication with any of his former associates, he had no other alternative than calmly to submit to his condition. Being accustomed to encounter strange vicissitudes, and despairing to regain his freedom by entreaties, he became at length composed; and familiarizing himself with the habits of his fellow-sufferers, began to think lightly of his

misfortune, and even appeared to forget his miserable condition. It is probable that he would either have remained a prisoner in this ship, or been transferred to another of the same kind on some remote station, had not a kind friend stepped forward to release him from his captivity. This was Mr. Samuel White, who thus relates the story of his liberation:

"BAD example paved the way to his ruin, and Misfortune seemed enamoured of his parts. Twice he was forced to try his fortune in the king's service, and was twice handed over to the tender in the bay. On one of these occasions, an acquaintance, being somehow apprized of the matter, communicated it to me: when not supposing it a free act of his own, I procured an order for his release; and, to make sure work, took a boat, and went with it to the vessel myself. There I found him with a crew of thoughtless dissolute

mortals, cooped up in the hold, brooding over his misfortunes. I informed him of what had been done; and gladly hastening from that scene of folly and profaneness, bade him follow. So indeed he did; but with a sullen sort of indifference, as much as to say, 'I would as lief stay where I am.'—At no great distance of time, he got into a similar hobble; but whether wilfully or otherwise, I am not informed: and another well-wisher of his stepped forward, and had him liberated."—His active friend on this latter occasion was Mr. Emerson, who now purchased his freedom with a sum of money.

Whether inclination, depravity, or the bitter remembrance that all efforts to redeem his lost character were fruitless, urged him to the latter desperate act of imprudence, is uncertain. Nothing however could now save him; and after loitering away some weeks in a state of ruinous dissipation, he at last, in a fit of

despair, entered as a private soldier in the 108th regiment, commanded by the earl of Granard. To avoid the contempt of his companions, and the reproaches of those who had so honourably exerted themselves to fix him in a reputable condition in life, he resolved if possible to keep this last transaction from their knowledge. But this determination was of little avail; for being in some degree a public character, he was in a short time recognised by his former friend Mr. Atkinson, in a soldier's jacket, at the door of the rendezvous of the 108th regiment, on Usher's Island, near the mansion of his kind benefactress the countess of Moira. This discovery alarmed Dermody much. The recollection of past happiness rushed upon his mind, and he endeavoured to elude Mr. Atkinson: but that gentleman, being certain that his conjectures were just, and that he had not mistaken his person, followed and overtook him; when after expressing his surprise and

regret that he should reduce himself to so deplorable a situation, he requested to know the cause of such a reverse of fortune. Dermody answered that it was his own free and voluntary act; and that as Misfortune had hitherto 'marked him for her own,' he was resolved to pursue his fate in other climates, and view the world in the character in which he then appeared.

Mr. Atkinson, having the honour of an intimate friendship with the noble earl who commanded the regiment, took an early opportunity to represent the case of Dermody, and recommend him to his lordship's care and protection. Lady Granard (who on all occasions particularly regarded him) having been made acquainted with the circumstance, a consultation was held at Moira-house between her ladyship, her noble husband, her brother the earl of Moira, and her amiable mother the countess dowager: when it was resolved that the most probable method of reclaiming him

would be to let him remain for some time in the ranks, subject to the discipline of the regiment; and that if his conduct should appear to deserve attention, he should by degrees be noticed by his lordship, and advanced according to his merit. A wiser and more judicious plan could not have been suggested. The strict regulations of the army were best calculated to curb his passions, and qualify the bad habits and wild sallies of his youth. His conduct in the regiment was irreproachable: and as he continued to deserve the favour and attention of the noble families who had so generously interested themselves in his behalf, he was progressively advanced to the ranks of corporal and serjeant; and on the 17th of September 1794, in the nineteenth year of his age, embarked with the regiment for England.

Even in this situation; confined as he was within the narrow bounds of a transport, and restrained by the fixed regulations of

his regiment; he found leisure to write "The Retrospect:" and if we may judge of the delight which he took in the society of his muse from the following lines, it must have been great indeed; nor would the wonder of those who perused the poem have been inferior to this, on beholding the author of it only approaching to manhood, and drest in the uniform of a private soldier.

"Ah, Poesy! on whose superior state
Innum'rous ills and daily perils wait,
Full oft have I had cause (if woe severe
A cause can give) thy converse to forswear;
Yet, with those various evils in thy train,
Methinks thy pleasure far exceeds thy pain.
As through the frothing surge, with desperate sweep,
The smooth keel cuts and harrows up the deep;
While the tough cordage cracks, and yelling loud
The fierce north blusters in the frozen shroud;
In this pent vessel's narrow womb confin'd,
Slave to the mercy of the wave and wind;
Who sets my bold unshackled fancy free?
Who, O celestial visitant! but thee*?"

* Innumerable parts of Dermody's works, and which in the extracts introduced into the present memoirs it has been con-

On his arrival in England, it was his good fortune to be placed under the immediate notice and protection of that beloved and excellent nobleman, the earl of Moira; who, having taken the command of the army destined for the coast of France, appointed Dermody to a second-lieutenantcy in the waggon-corps. In this situation he conducted himself with much

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sidered more respectful to the reader not to point out minutely, evince his attentive poetical reading, and excellent taste and judgment in imitation. The above passage will suggest immediately the recollection of the following lines from Goldsmith's Deserted Village:

"And thou, sweet Poetry! thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly when sensual joys invade;
Unfit, in these degen'rate days of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame:
Dear charming nymph! dejected and decried;
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel;
Thou nurse of all the virtues:—fare thee well!"

The fourth and fifth couplets of the extract from Dermody may perhaps vie in picturesque beauty, and vocal expressiveness, with any thing in Falconer's admired Shipwreck.

propriety, with the exception of a few irregularities (the consequence of frequent intoxication) which occurred while he was stationed at Southampton; and the greatest expectations were formed by his friends of his becoming in a short time a thoroughly reformed and respected character. They imagined that the active and perilous profession into which he had entered, would quickly occasion him to abandon his follies and pernicious habits; and that the society and conversation of the elevated characters by whom he now was daily surrounded, would create in him a dignified emulation, and inspire him with a noble ardour for military enterprise. Nor did he in this respect disappoint their liberal conjectures. He was a sharer in all the dangers and difficulties encountered by the English army in this unfortunate expedition. He visited many remarkable places on the continent; and among others the tomb of Abelard in Lombardy, on which occasion he narrowly escaped being made a prisoner. He was in almost

every considerable action, and received several dangerous wounds: one of which in some degree disfigured his face; and another deprived him of the use of his left hand, a bullet having passed directly through it. The battles however in which he had been most conspicuously engaged, are particularly hinted at in the following lines, extracted from a short poem entitled "The Invalid."

"And as in Flandria's shatter'd map I trace
Each signal spot, each memorable place,
Where sluic'd in every vein, and steep'd in gore,
Grim Death himself the English standard bore:
Here point to Dunkirk's strength; or here display
Catau's dread plain, or Ghent's immortal day:
The pictur'd scenes still bid my spirit glow,
And crush with iron hand the felon foe."

In scenes like these,—of dangerous daily enterprise, nightly watchings, and continual alarm,—the mind is too sorely harassed, too busily employed in the passing events, to find leisure for indulging in vague enjoyments, or tedious and uncertain specula-

tions. Under such circumstances Dermody, even if his inclinations had leaned towards vice, had little time for the pursuit of it. It is however due to his memory to say, that while he continued in the service (which he did till the British army returned to England), he displayed much bravery; and was noticed rather for the modesty and propriety of his behaviour, than for any striking deformity of character, or disreputable propensity. On the reduction of this army, he was put on the half-pay list; which, though a small, was yet a certain income, and sufficient to satisfy the urgent calls of necessity.

Being thus permitted once more to indulge his passions without restraint, and having stored his mind with much useful knowledge, he determined to visit London, renounce his former follies, and begin a new life of glory. His warm and wild imagination formed scenes of enjoyment which he vainly considered were there to be felicitous, variable, and perpetual. Full

of these romantic ideas, he arrived in the metropolis; and continuing to merit the favour of the earl of Moira, was at the expence of his lordship placed in the house of Mr. Faulder, a bookseller in Bond-street. Here he had an ample opportunity of improving his taste in literature, and of publishing with peculiar advantage his poetical compositions; but for the share of attention which he received, he was indebted solely to the patronage and generosity of his lordship, who paid for his board. His stay therefore was short; the frolics too of his fancy, his increasing irregularities, and the whimsicality of his disposition, ill suiting the domestic economy of Mr. Faulder's establishment. Conceiving that the liberality of his patron ought to have secured him at least some degree of kindness and respect, he could not always receive with patience the harsh rebukes which his austere host so often applied to his eccentricities; and with as little ceremony as regret he in a short time forsook

a situation in which he found nothing that might recompense its natural unsuitableness to his disposition.

The virtuous resolutions which he had made, were speedily disregarded or forgotten. The town had pleasures which he pursued with an avidity his slender finances could not support: these were consequently soon destroyed; and he often became deeply involved in pecuniary troubles, from which the bounty of his patron generally released him. The frequency of these demands, however, at length called for an investigation; the result of which proved nearly fatal to all his hopes and fair prospects. Lord Moira reprobated his conduct, and threatened to discontinue his favours if he did not amend it. But this was only a threat. Those who are acquainted with his lordship's character, know that the persons whom he once honours with his friendship and esteem, must, before he withdraws his protection, be proved to be undeserving of

it. Slight surmise, envious report, and malicious insinuation, are by him disregarded: and when his humanity is not triumphant, when his heart is closed against the appeals of distress, it is when the objects are unworthy; it is when their follies become ruinous to virtue, their vices dangerous to society, and their characters odious or despicable,—and even then he can pity and relieve. From the anger of such a man, Dermody, while he committed no extraordinary crime, had little to dread: his lordship's remonstrances were regarded with attention; and promises of amendment being given, he was again taken into favour.

He had not, however, virtue enough to form judicious plans of economy, nor resolution to adhere to them when they were formed for him. His own sufferings had not yet taught him prudence; nor the follies of others, wisdom: he followed the impulse of his passions, regardless of consequences; and the means by which his

pleasures were often obtained, were neither creditable to himself nor pleasing to his patron. Urged on by his propensity for low company (which was now perceived to be daily increasing), he felt little reluctance to participate in the meanest amusements, and at length became inattentive even to the advice of his noble benefactor. He sought the conversation of the ignorant, and fled from the admonitions of the wise and prudent; and after encountering various difficulties, was arrested by one of his creditors, and lodged in the Fleet. Though in defiance of the kind advice of his patron, he had thus plunged into dissipation, and wantonly brought this calamity upon himself, he was not suffered to languish in a prison. The earl of Moira, with his usual generosity, satisfied the demands of his creditors, and he was liberated: but to prevent a recurrence of the same incident, his lordship condescended to write him an admonitory letter, in which he pointed out the dangers that would inevitably accrue

from an adherence to such baneful principles as he was indulging; and having enclosed a liberal present, told him that till he had seen a thorough reformation in his conduct, a seeming desire to maintain himself by his own labours, and to appear a respectable member of society,—he must, till that fortunate moment arrived (which, he feared, was far distant), withdraw his protection. Dermody was unprepared for this severe loss; and the consciousness of his having merited his lordship's displeasure, gave him excessive pain.

In London he had formed few connections that could be rendered useful to him in his difficulties, or profitable in his speculations. His talents were unknown to the public; he had planned no system for his support; and though patronized (or rather supported) by the earl of Moira, he neglected the opportunity which might have led to the advancement both of his reputation and his circumstances. The fairy regions of wild enchantment; the gay,

fantastic, and ever-variable scenes of pleasure and felicity; which his strong and youthful fancy had once pictured out, now vanished from his sight: and leaving a melancholy blank, made those hours which he fondly imagined were to be passed among the proud votaries of fame and fortune, hateful, hopeless, and terrific.—This he considered as the most afflicting period of his life. He had neither the virtue nor the resolution to bear up against the loss which he had just sustained; and when he should have struggled to rescue his lost character, he sunk again into his irregular and destructive habits. Those with whom he now associated, were of the lowest order of society; and instead of preserving for the day of want the last liberal donation of his noble patron, he mingled in their ruinous debaucheries. Having thus dissipated his last shilling, he wandered about for some time without either much food or clothing: and at the approach of despair took shelter at last in a miserable garret

rented by an Irish cobler in a low and vulgar part of the town *, where the same poignant distresses were felt which in similar situations had formerly assailed him, but without the same hope or prospect of being relieved from them.

Four years had now nearly elapsed since the author of these memoirs had either seen or heard from Dermody. His strictest inquiries had proved fruitless; and he conceived that his former unhappy friend had, with many other of his brother-officers, fallen in the field. Indeed from a persuasion that it was really so, he had for some time given up all further inquiries respecting him. In these conjectures, however, he was deceived; for early in the month of January 1800 he received the following interesting note:

"DEAR SIR,

"IF four years have happily passed away without erasing from your memory a

* Strutton-ground, Westminster.

person once favoured with your kindness and protection, and you still possess the same generous mind as when he first knew you, you will not, I am certain, refuse your assistance and advice to your unfortunate friend, THOMAS DERMODY.

"*P. S.* The inclosed lines will more forcibly explain the feelings of him who thus humbly entreats your notice.

21, *Strutton-ground, Westminster,*
13*th Jan.* 1800.

ODE TO FRENZY.

"STABB'D by the murd'rous arts of men,
My breast still op'd with many a wound,
I pour the agonizing strain,
And view thee with deliriums round:
Thy choicest tortures now prepare,
O Frenzy! free me from despair.

"Thy visionary darkness shrouds
The tender brain in rayless clouds:
Thy slow and subtle poison steals,
Till abdicated Reason reels;
Then, rising wild in moody trance,
Quick thy pale-visag'd fiends advance.

"I burn, I throb, my pulses beat:
I feel thy rankling arrows now;
They tremble in my bleeding brow,
And pierce Reflection in his filmy seat.
In heights of pain my heart is tost,
And all the meaner sorrows lost.

"Who now will fear the puny sting of woe?
Who start disorder'd at the phantom Death?
I mock the childish tears that trickling flow;
I smile at pangs, my softest pang beneath.
The canker grief that silent eats be thine,
The noble ecstacy be mine!

"The hurried step, the pregnant pause severe,
The spectred flash of sense, the hideous smile,
The frozen stare, Revenge's thrilling tear,
The awful start, sharp look, and mischief's secret wile;
These are the proud demoniac marks I claim,
Since grief and feeling are the same:
Then all thy racks sublime prepare;
And free me, Frenzy, from despair!"

The surprise and feeling excited in the author's breast by the perusal of this note, were too powerful to be allayed by any other means than a sight of the object of

these emotions; and without regard for other business, he prepared to make the best of his way to the abode of Dermody. His mind being solely occupied on the interview that was about to take place, he paid little regard to those who passed him in his way through St. James's-park to the unfortunate poet's habitation. But he was left only a very short time to reflect on this circumstance, before his attention was called to a very extraordinary object that appeared to watch and follow him with particular caution and attention, and seemingly in the utmost distress and misery. Whenever he slackened or mended his pace, the stranger did the same. The wretched and emaciated appearance of the person, with the wildness of his manner, and the powerful agitation under which he laboured, at length gave the author much uneasiness; and as he turned suddenly round, in order to demand the cause of such extraordinary conduct, the un-

happy youth accosted him in the following manner: "Sir, do you not know me? Has misfortune so altered me that I am not remembered by you? Do you not recollect the name and person of Dermody?" A pause ensued. It is needless to repeat what passed: the feeling of the moment, he hopes, was a just one; Dermody was not forgotten.

It is scarcely possible that a stronger excitement to compassion could present itself, and unfeeling indeed must the heart be that would not sympathize with and relieve a human being labouring under such apparent and accumulated misery. Those youthful features which only a few years before were pleasing, attractive, and intelligent; in which were to be traced the sparks of intellectual greatness; were now totally changed. A settled melancholy had taken possession of his mind: and his care-worn pallid countenance, disfigured by a wound which he had received in action;

added to the meanness of his garments, for he was almost naked; exhibited him as in reality a picture of Despair. He readily accepted an invitation to dinner, and the afternoon was spent in disrobing him of his weather-beaten habiliments.

Few days passed before the author, with Dermody in a new suit, appeared abroad. His story being told, the only answer was, "You must publish. In your travels you have seen much; what have you written?" —"Nothing," he replied. "It will no doubt excite your surprise when I tell you, that during the period I have passed in active service in England, France, Holland, and Germany, I have written but little poetry, and (except some irregular correspondence) have not committed my thoughts on any subject to paper. The objects I have seen, the extraordinary situations in which I have been placed, are, it is true, imprinted in my memory, but they yet remain untold." In a short time, however,

he produced a collection of interesting poems; which, being added to two others of considerable length that he had formerly written, formed a small volume.

Through the kindness of Mr. Allingham *, a purchaser was speedily procured; and it is but justice to remark, that on this occasion Messrs. Vernor and Hood paid particular attention to the talents of Dermody. At the request of Mr. Allingham, who on this as on every future occasion was Dermody's generous friend and adviser, they without the least knowledge of him as a writer, or any other account than that given of him by this gentleman, gave him a liberal sum for the work. This relieved

* It would be interesting to the reader, were the author at liberty to enumerate the many favours which Dermody received from this gentleman during the short period of their acquaintance. His generosity was not limited; it was worthy of imitation; but he shrinks from panegyric, and the author will not offend him with it.

him from immediate embarrassment, and enabled him for some time to live at ease, and avoid the importunities of pressing creditors; of which, though he lived at this time in the humblest walk of life, he was in perpetual dread.

These poems he dedicated to his former patroness, the countess of Moira; and the lines in which he solicits her notice, shew that neither time nor misfortunes had effaced his gratitude to that noble lady.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COUNTESS OF MOIRA.

"Deem'st thou ingrate or dead the shepherd boy,
Erewhile who sung thee to the list'ning plain?
Still pausing on thy deeds with pensive joy,
Ingratitude nor death has hush'd the strain.
Still drest in all her captivating hues,
Smiling in tears, will languishingly steal
O'er my fantastic dream the well-lov'd muse,
Like morn dim-blushing through its dewy veil.

Her wild flow'rs, bound into a simple wreath,
Meekly she proffers to thy partial sight:
Oh, softly on their tender foliage breathe!
Oh, save them from the critic's cruel blight!
Nurse the unfolding blooms with care benign,
And 'mid them weave one laurel leaf of thine.

"THOMAS DERMODY."

In the Retrospect, the first poem in this collection, are to be found many admirable passages. The descriptions are clear and forcible; the observations on domestic happiness various, lively, and interesting; and the moral reflections vigorous and sublime. This piece commences with a view of those almost forgotten kingdoms which once gave laws to the world: and embraces in its progress all the projects, views, and employments, which occupy man's ambition; from the summit of power and rank, down to the humble but happy gradations of rural and domestic life.

"THROUGH history's faithful glass as I survey
What kingdoms flourish, and what realms decay;
Now touch'd with pity, now inspir'd with rage,
Scarce can I trust the long-recorded page;
New fatal proofs from ancient annals call,
Yet deem these ancient annals fables all.
Lo! once in learned pomp where Athens rose,
The green pool stagnates, and the hemlock grows;
One dreary sepulchre, one mingled gloom,
Lo! deep in ruin droops imperial Rome.
Say, where that wide unconquerable sway
Where once the 'Macedonian madman' lay?
Burst like a gaudy bubble on the stream,
'Tis past; and all its glory but a dream."

And again:

"THROUGH heedless luxury, ambitious pride;
Through lust of plunder, or through heav'n defied;
When slow destruction mines the tow'ry wall,
When the huge pillars of a nation fall,
Succeeding nations gradual fill its place,
To swell of boundless time the mighty space.
In climes least favour'd by benignant skies,
The white sails flap, and stately bulwarks rise,
Commerce and patient industry achieve
What sloth and opulence un'tempted leave.
Soon the dry wilderness is seen no more;
Huge cities shine where deserts lay before:

'Mid the deep glen amaz'd the hermit views
The long canal, the garden's vernal hues;
Or by the mountain's rough but shelt'ring side,
The newly-risen hamlet's rustic pride."

And thus he paints the happiness and respect enjoyed by one who,

" Early in this mad world's profuse career,
Himself profuse, had bought experience dear;"

and who had retired from the distracted din and folly of the town, to partake of the comforts of a rural life:

" JUST by the pathway rose his neat abode,
As if to woo the trav'ller from the road;
Before, a crystal vein of water stood,
Behind, 'twas shadow'd by a waving wood.
The green-ey'd duck that waddled in the yard;
The gritting wheel that on the pavement jarr'd;
The flail, with sudden dash that stunn'd the ear;
The plaint that gurgled from the dove-house near;
The playful curs that would each other chase;
All lent the whitewash'd dome a past'ral grace:
And all, by spleensick fashion unconfin'd,
Were but the copious comment of his mind.

" Yes, happy master of that small domain!
Thine was the honest blessing of the swain;
With thy big praise the stranger's breast would glow,
Still doubly dear to ev'ry child of woe.
Yes, thou wouldst smile, unselfishly o'erjoy'd,
To view the peasant in thy field employ'd;
From thence procuring (there no need to steal)
For his weak tribe the comfortable meal:
Delightful toil! while the slow load he led
Of golden grain, a family he fed;
Then at hush'd eve the chaste connubial kiss
Was his reward, and love's domestic bliss.
Ev'n cradled infants, taught by nurturing dame,
Full well could lisp their second father's name.
Around his hospitable door would sit
Grey-bearded Health, plain Sense, and native Wit;
In the brown cup he wash'd all pride away,
And not one poor man round him but was gay:
By sober rules he spent his small estate,
Kept want aloof, nor wish'd a higher fate."

Nor can the feeling mind be less gratified at the following well-drawn picture of female profligacy and distress:

" Pity the wretched daughter of despair;
Nor slight her sorrow, though you shun her snare.
She once in beauteous innocence was blest:
Pure was her pleasure, tranquil was her rest;

And at the song obscene, the lawless flame,
And broken vow, she blush'd unconscious shame.
Once fenc'd with honour as the thorny rose,
Now bare she lies to ev'ry wind that blows;
Like some vile weed, impregnate with decay,
Which rots yet stings athwart the public way.—
Art thou not shock'd that dulcet voice to hear
Tun'd to the felon-oath, and scoff severe?
Ev'n in the loose delight no bliss she feels:
The purse she pilfers, the rich toy conceals;
Acts with feign'd passion the incentive part,
Her features less disguis'd than is her heart.
Hence ever, ev'n in the delicious fold
The muscles slacken, and the pulse is cold.
Oh! from that hollow cheek, and beamless eye,
Precipitate as from a Fury fly:
Though silently its painted beauties seize,
There lurk the fiends Distraction and Disease;
Scowl in the dimple, taint the fragrant breath,
And in the very clasp present you death.

"How, lovely woman, how can you depart
From all those graceful fires that warm the heart?
How, 'witching prodigal, can you bestow
Your brightest gem for infamy and woe?
Roseless the cheek, extinguish'd is the eye,
And ev'n your darling vanity must die.—

Ask yon pale wretch, deserted and decay'd,
Whose easy trust some villain has betray'd,
If all her vital senses are not cold,
Cold as some statue, in the venal fold;
When gay deceit (heart-sick, yet gay) must move
The sleeping embers of unhallow'd love.
Oh! she will tell you, and she tells you true,
That she the thrilling transport never knew;
That from the dragon-grasp, the baneful breath,
Of each wild suitor, came disgust and death;
Since first within that glowing breast she lay
From whence she fled:—ah! lost, lamented day.
Then turtle peace, that unbought odours shed,
Truth, feeling, faith, and maiden candour, fled;
Then, thou poor female! from thy hopeless view,
Clad in thick clouds, ev'n heav'n itself withdrew."

The Pursuit of Patronage follows this poem: and here Dermody has, in a pathetic and masterly style, described the distresses of those elder and illustrious sons of poesy whose writings have thrown so glorious a lustre over the annals of English literature, and whose undeserved penury has equally cast a foul disgrace on the frivolous and unfeeling age in which they flourished.

With Chatterton he begins his complaint; who, next to Spenser, was his idol.

"Ah! thou, encompass'd with domestic pain,
Who fondly hop'st to build the lofty strain;
To weave the magic lay whose light and shade,
Deep hues, and dazzling colours, must not fade;
Who mount'st imagination's rainbow wing,
Dipt in gay taints of the Pierian spring;
Ah! turn, and damp'd be thy enthusiast joy,
To Chatterton, the muse's matchless boy;
With ev'ry grace of ancient wisdom blest,
All untaught genius breathing from his breast.

"Behold the haughty soul, sublime that flew,
Submissive for a paltry pittance sue!
Behold those lines that fed the general ear,
Despis'd, rejected, by the listless peer *!
Behold (when vain each gentler plea to claim
A little notice for that mighty name),
In scorn too fierce, and disappointment dire,
The wonder of the learned world expire!

* Dermody, as has already appeared in his essay on the ancient comedy of England, takes every opportunity of censuring lord Orford's conduct to the unfortunate Chatterton, though he was himself often favoured with his notice and approbation.

" But shouldst thou more on elder proofs rely,
Th' historic page shall wound thy injur'd eye;
There still in sad succession they appear,
To check thy warmth, and start the tender tear."

Here the fate of Spenser, Dryden, and Marlow, successively attracts the poet's notice. Even Johnson is placed, though indeed very erroneously, in the number of those who felt the neglect of power; the lines however are pleasing and elegant:

" Could Johnson's learned skill, or moral pow'r,
Whose science rifled ev'ry Attic flow'r,
Their honey-dews suck'd from all blooms that blow *,
And stripp'd of all its sweets Hymettus' brow;
Could aught his wisdom or his worth obtain
Through many a year, elaborately vain?
In patient poverty his youth was past;
And when slow favour, ling'ring, came at last,
Life's sprightly vigour flown, enjoyment lost,
Dear was the gift that so much labour cost."

* This may seem a pleonasm, somewhat resembling Virgil's *cavæ caverna:* Thomson however has, " Whether the *blossom blows.*"

Butler and Buckingham follow; and

"In a dark garret, where the biting cold
No cheerful hearth allays, poor Boyse behold *!
A blanket skewer'd his shiv'ring shoulder wears,
Outrageous Hunger at his vitals tears,
Not one dry crust his tuneful toil requites;
Yet e'en in famish'd misery he writes."

* Samuel Boyse, an ingenious but unfortunate poet, was the son of Joseph Boyse, a dissenting minister at Dublin, where he was born in 1708. After receiving a grammatical education he was sent to Glasgow, where he married a tradesman's daughter before he was twenty. This imprudent step, added to the extravagance of himself and wife, involved him in misery. He published a volume of poems at Edinburgh addressed to lady Eglintoun, who liberally rewarded him; and an elegy on the countess of Stormont procured him from lord Stormont a handsome present. From Edinburgh he came to London, with a recommendatory letter written by the duchess of Gordon to Mr. Pope, and another to chancellor King; both of which he neglected to deliver. He loved mean company, and indulged in the grovelling habits of low life. His principal support arose from writing for the Gentleman's Magazine, and other periodical publications. The wretched situation he was in at this time, is thus described by one who knew him. "He sat up in bed with the blanket wrapped about him, through which he had cut a hole large enough to receive his arm; and placing the paper on his knee, scribbled in the best manner he could the verses he was obliged to make." In 1745 he wrote an Historical Review of the Transactions of Europe, which was far from being ill-written. He wrote

Smart's melancholy situation is feelingly described:

"Hark! what wild numbers break, sublimely sweet,
The breathing stillness of this deep retreat?
What bursts delicious of reviving song
Steal on each sense, those gloomy cells among?
'Tis Smart: anon the maniac minstrel raves,
Loud as the tempest, fiercer than the waves;
And now, attuning soft a gentler lay,
Its tones, how musically! faint away."

Delacour, Lloyd, Churchill, and a train of the minor poets who have felt the hard gripe of poverty, next fill the page. Nor have the professors of the sister arts, music and painting, escaped his notice: the disastrous fate of Caravaggio is thus related.

"Who has not heard of Caravaggio's name?
Illumin'd by the painter's purest flame,
His graceful strokes delude the gazing eye,
Glide to the heart, and Nature's self supply.

---

numerous poems; none of which are now read except "the Deity," which is admitted into many collections, and has been praised by two very different writers, Fielding and Hervey. He died in 1749, in Shoe-lane; and was buried at the expence of the parish. *Watkins's Biographical Dictionary.*

"On journey bent, his weary feet could find,
Tatter'd and poor, no habitation kind,
No unthatch'd hovel, no deserted shed,
Where hapless Genius might repose his head.
At length a sordid inn, where carters rest
And beggars vile, receives the gifted guest;
Whose skill, employ'd to grace the gaudy sign,
Must prove its best efforts before he dine.
And now the umber'd board before him stands;
Pallet and pencil fill his forming hands;
The mingling colours meet, and red and white
Each other's aid harmoniously unite,
Till the full figures rise, and swell upon the sight.
Sublime it swings across the public road:
At morn the artist quits his mean abode.

"Meanwhile, by fortune led to pass that way,
On neighing courser with attendants gay,
A critic wight came 'pricking o'er the plain;'
Right soon the sign-post doth his speed detain:
With curious haste he views, and quick surprise,
And for a sum immense the picture buys.
Amaz'd with joy, th' unconscious landlord stares;
Straight from his stall the saddled steed prepares;
And, wing'd with hope, the stranger's path pursues:—
But how the rest to tell, too tragic muse?
By a ditch-side, in death his sorrowing eyes
For ever seal'd, the slighted painter lies."

Of his other poems in this collection it is sufficient to say that many of them are pleasing and elegant, the thoughts are generally true, and the expressions forcible; and though most of them were written to procure an immediate supply, they will be found to be such as only a poet like Dermody could produce.

The zeal of the few friends who were now acquainted with his distresses, soon procured him a number of advocates. His story became extensively known; and among the arbiters of wit, and the admirers of poetical compositions, his talents and situation were frequent subjects of discourse. The force of his genius was generally acknowledged; and from many who interested themselves in his behalf, he reaped more solid advantages than praise and admiration. But neither poverty, experience, nor the contempt of the world, had yet taught him prudence: he had no sooner excited their compassion, and pro-

fited by their generosity, than he neglected their advice; and without reflecting that those who now administered to his necessities, were only prompted to do so by a humane consideration of his genius and misfortunes, and that they were at liberty to withdraw their protection the moment he ceased to deserve it, he again plunged into his former dissipation, and unhappily defeated the liberal intentions of many who possessed the power to render the effects of them beneficial and permanent.

He was, however, free from literary hypocrisy: he never spoke one thing and wrote another; and would rather sacrifice his dearest interest, than what he termed his honest judgment. An instance of this kind of independance once occurred at Mr. Wright's the bookseller in Piccadilly: —A nobleman who had been solicited to befriend the poor poet, and who had frequently administered to his wants, called there one day with a list of subscribers

whom he had obtained for a book which Dermody was about to publish. Just at this time Dermody came into the shop; but perceiving Mr. Wright in conversation with his lordship, whom he instantly recognised, he quickly turned upon his heel, and made an attempt to go. Being noticed however by his lordship, who immediately saluted him with a cordial shake of the hand, he returned to the shop; and when interrogated relative to his intended publication, freely entered into discourse. From the various and common topics of the day, the conversation turned upon literary disquisition; a kind of argument which Dermody was at all times ready to engage in; and which delighted those who had the power, and were fortunate enough, to engage his attention, and draw forth his opinions. His lordship, unluckily, at last took up a new publication from the counter; and putting it into his hands, desired him to peruse it at a future period,

and give him his opinion of its merits. Dermody replied, "My lord, I have already read the book; and found too little pleasure in the task, to endure the fatigue of again wading through such a mass of dullness." His lordship thanked him for his candid opinion, and instantly left the shop. —"Fatal mistake!" exclaimed Mr. Wright: "you have for ever lost a friend and patron: his lordship is the author!" Dermody very coolly turned over some leaves of the book; and reading here and there a few passages, replied, "Were the king the author, it is badly written. Then why should his lordship be offended? for had I known that it was his, I should certainly have told him the same truth." Mr. Wright's prediction was verified, nor did poor Dermody ever after receive the least favour from his lordship.

The undisguised sentiments of his heart were on every occasion delivered with the same sincerity. It would be an injustice

to his memory to say that Dermody disregarded the opinions, or slighted the real talents, of the great; or that he did not keenly feel the loss of patronage, occasioned too frequently by his principle of independance. He knew his errors, and feared them; and besides this unaccommodating temper, those who were not thoroughly acquainted with him, would perceive in his manner something which by many would have been termed a disrespectful self-importance, but which in him was really a modest diffidence. He shunned praise: and never, but when his wants compelled him, courted patronage; which, when obtained, he had not the art to keep.

While with habits so eccentric, with principles so wild, and passions so perverted, he gained the esteem and admiration of many of the greatest men of the age, it is not less characteristic of his singular disposition, that at the very time when he was receiving daily benefits from

them, he should fix his abode in a wretched garret (as has been before mentioned); where frequently were to be seen ascending the unlighted staircase, the messengers of learned societies, of leading patriots and statesmen. During this situation of his affairs, the following incident occurred.

Among those to whom the friendship of Mr. Allingham had introduced Dermody, was Mr. Johnson, now an officer in the regiment commanded by the earl of Moira. This gentleman, who was himself a votary of the muses, became very soon attached to Dermody; and frequently meeting him at the chambers of Mr. Allingham, would rally him on the uncouth mode in which he dressed himself and appeared in public. One day business brought him at an early hour to the apartments of his friend, who had likewise gone out sooner than usual; when, to his great astonishment, he found Dermody on the steps of the door, almost

in a state of nakedness, and offensively dirty.

Mr. Johnson, in an authoritative tone, desired Dermody to follow him. He was obeyed; and the march finished on the banks of the New River, at a tavern near Sadler's Wells, where this gentleman lodged. As they approached the door, Mr. Johnson with great caution commanded a halt; but in a low voice, that none might hear him and observe his companion. After surveying the fortifications, the order was given to ascend quickly, and take possession of a back room which overlooked the river, up one pair of stairs. The commander followed; and having shut the door, and fanned himself a little with his hat as if safe from the danger of the field and sure of his prisoner, he told him with a loud voice to strip to the skin. To Dermody the shouts of real war had not been so dreadful; he almost fancied that he was to be made a sacrifice to the god of battle,

However, he obeyed his superior; who, leaving Dermody to disrobe himself, went to order a scrubbing-brush, soap, towels, and a large tub of water. The appearance of this last article gave the poet a cold tremor: he was plunged in, and purified. Not less joy did Dermody feel when released from the terrors of his immersion, than did young Ammon,

> "When Glory, like the dazzling eagle, stood
> Perch'd on his beaver in the Granic flood."

A clean and fashionably frilled shirt, with appropriate stockings, shoes, breeches, neckcloth, waistcoat, and coat, were speedily brought from Mr. Johnson's wardrobe; and as they happened to fit him, he was, with the aid of the village barber, quickly metamorphosed from a ragged mendicant of Parnassus, into a fashionable modern gentleman.

The old habiliments were now with much disdain thrown from the window, upon the

bank of the river: and a comfortable supper having been by this time put upon the table, the two friends sat down to enjoy by a snug fire "the feast of *ducklings*, and the flow of soul." The cloth had not long been removed, before they perceived by the faint light of the moon, a number of persons wandering up and down the banks of the river. Soon afterwards torches were brought, and stuck at short distances from each other; in order, as it appeared, that the object of their search might be more easily discovered: and a dragging-iron being plunged into the river, shewed that they were in pursuit of a dead body. The stillness of the evening, the twinkling lights glancing on the smooth surface of the water, and the anxiety and grief pictured in every countenance, made the scene awful and interesting. Tale after tale was brought to the tavern, and each messenger varied in his report. One saw the unfortunate person wandering distract-

edly on the banks of the river, another saw him plunge into it: one saw him floating on the surface of the water; another, by the light of the torches, perceived him at the bottom: now he was found, and now he was not: now appeared one who had seen the body taken from the river; and now the discarded garments of Dermody, the unconscious cause of this alarm and anxiety, were brought to the tavern. At a late hour the populace gradually dispersed; some shedding tears, and others heaving only a sigh of sympathy, at the hapless fate of the wretched man who they supposed had by despair been driven to destroy himself. The dread that the general pity might be changed into resentment, alone hindered the two friends, who had witnessed the whole scene through the window, from declaring themselves the innocent authors of this unfounded alarm; for they were not at all inclined to laugh at so serious a mistake, nor to sport with the feelings

which were so interestingly conspicuous in every countenance.

As Dermody had been accustomed to live upon extraordinary and rapidly successive expedients, the change which he now experienced in his dress and appearance affected him but slightly. He returned to his landlord and companion the cobler, who was likewise an eccentric character, and in a short time his distresses became as great as before; though he was receiving daily assistance from private friends, and occasionally very considerable sums of money from the earl of Moira *, the present lord viscount Sidmouth (at that time chancellor of the exchequer), the right honourable Hiley Addington, the right honourable Mr.

* It has been already stated that lord Moira had, in consequence of Dermody's growing irregularities, withdrawn his patronage and support. But notwithstanding this resolution, his lordship seldom slighted his applications for relief.

Bragge, and sir James Bland Burges. Previously to the commencement of his acquaintance with the last-mentioned gentleman, Dermody, through a piece of low chicanery practised on his credulity by the clerk to the agent of his late regiment, had been deprived of his half-pay. This circumstance occasioned him great uneasiness; as he was at the time in much want of that provision, and had by his thoughtlessness and prodigality lost the esteem of most of the gentlemen who had been accustomed to relieve his wants: but his usual good-fortune still attended him, and the following letter procured him another liberal patron.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"I HAVE been emboldened to intrude the few lines inclosed, from the publicity of your distinguished talents, and the

liberal encouragement you are accustomed to bestow on the less fortunate sons of literature. A small volume of my poetry has been lately published; and, though many disagreeable circumstances obstruct the emulation of a young man indigent and unpatronized, has been received with some approbation. But the *laudatur et alget* could be very well applied, my emolument being trifling indeed.

"Should you condescend to honour this humble application with your notice, I shall take the liberty of presenting the few pieces of mine published to the candour of your perusal.

"With most profound respect, I am, sir, your very obedient servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"*London, Jan. 29th*, 1801.
No. 28, Strutton-ground, Westminster."

TO SIR JAMES BLAND BURGES, BART.
ON HIS ADMIRABLE POEM OF "RICHARD THE FIRST."

"Lo! from the ruins of 'the mighty dead,'
Once more the English Genius lifts his head;
Britain once more with partial transport views
Th' appropriate honours of the epic muse.
Oft has the fervour of her genuine flame
Illum'd the Theban or the Spartan name;
Lending, with liberal grace, to chiefs unknown
Immortal wreaths, and laurels not their own:
While the brave worthies of this favour'd clime
Lay clouded in some legendary rhyme,
Whose quaint inanity presum'd to raise
A lasting theme in mockery of praise.
Not so, with unaffected splendour bright,
Meets thy First Richard our enraptur'd sight;
Emerging from oblivion's central shade,
In all the majesty of song array'd.
Oh! would the heirs of pomp, the gifted great,
So charm the hours of dignified retreat;
So, by soft sanction, tenderly impart
A new-born lustre to the tuneful art;
Still might I hope, intent on high emprize,
To see a Dorset or a Sydney rise.—
The hope is vain: that gen'rous glow divine
Which breathes in harmony from breasts like thine;

That soaring spirit which disdains to creep
Round the smooth base of the Parnassian steep,
But, hurried with the whirlwind's force along,
Grasps the rough summit of sublimest song;
Where shall I seek 'mid the degen'rate band
Who slight the beauties of their native land;
For foreign flow'rs of short duration sigh,
And scorn those hardy blooms that never die,
Nurs'd by the rigours of our northern sky?
To thy auspicious star we fondly turn,
Whose steadier rays aloft distinctly burn:
To light the minstrel through life's stormy main,
Or guide the banish'd muses back again;
Here, safe at length, to rest their pilgrim feet,
And claim their old hereditary seat."

An appeal of this nature could not have been made without a certainty of success; particularly when preferred by one in distress, and accompanied with such evident marks of learning and genius. Sir James answered him immediately; thanking him for his elegant compliment, and inviting him to breakfast. The appearance of Dermody on this occasion was not very prepossessing: for he was ragged, dirty, and

apparently dogged and surly: but after some time his conversation became so brilliant, and his literary observations so acute, that his entertainer, delighted with such a display of talents, suggested the propriety of his undertaking some work on a larger scale than any thing which he had yet written. To this Dermody expressed no objection, except his poverty, which made it necessary for him to supply his daily wants by the effusions of his pen. Sir James endeavoured, by a temporary assistance, to enable him to obviate this necessity: and promised not only to exert himself to support a subscription for any work which he might undertake, but to introduce him to several eminent literary characters; and particularly to Mr. Cumberland, whose advice and long experience might prove in the highest degree serviceable to him. He received this offer with great apparent thankfulness, and promised to apply himself immediately to the task.

On the following day, however, a circumstance occurred, which nearly terminated this new-formed connection. Sir James Burges had given Dermody a draft on Messrs. Drummond for ten pounds; but now, to his great surprise, he received a letter from him in which he lamented that the baronet's good intentions had been frustrated by his having lost the draft through a hole in his pocket, and requested to have another of the same amount. On applying at Messrs. Drummond, sir James was informed that the draft had been presented and paid the day before, and it was produced with Dermody's indorsement on it. In consequence of this, he wrote him a letter, expressive of his opinion of such conduct; to which he received the following answer.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"MISTAKENLY to lose the place I had the honour to attain in your good opinion, is to me a matter of much sincere regret. I lament my imprudence in having mentioned the affair in question; and am sorry you suppose me so mean, or rather so mad, as to suggest a needless falsity. I own my having received a check on your banker, and likewise the sum specified at Messrs. Drummond's; but I certainly do not lie when I aver that I lost the note, in coming home. I shall certainly not forgive myself for being induced by some disagreeable circumstances to drop any hint about it; and I confess, on reflection, the impropriety and folly of the action. Nevertheless, I hope you will acquit me of an intentional error, when I declare my innocence of any deception in regard to imposing on your goodness, or

rendering your bounty answerable for my misfortune. I am involved in trouble at this moment, but it is particularly aggravated by a sense of your displeasure.

"I humbly request you will pardon the intrusion of these few exculpatory lines; and believe me to be, with the highest respect and gratitude, sir, your most obedient and obliged servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY,

"28, *Strutton-ground, Thursday Morning, 19th Feb.* 1801."

Sir James was satisfied with this explanation; and several other interviews took place between him and Dermody, in the course of which the latter brought him the various poems which form the second volume of his works, published in 1801. Of these sir James thought so highly, that he opened a subscription for their publication at Mr. Wright's in Piccadilly; which would probably have been successful, had

not the imprudence and strange conduct of the poet rendered the design abortive.

As his dress and appearance were such as not to allow of his appearing at Mr. Wright's shop, sir James recommended his case to the Literary Fund; from which a benefaction of ten pounds was issued, entrusted to the care of Mr. Baker their collector, for the purpose of providing decent clothing for him. As soon as he was properly equipped, he wrote the following letter to sir James Burges, expressive of his sentiments on the occasion.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"WHEN you consider the emotions of my heart, you will pardon these few lines of sincere acknowledgment for your unparalleled goodness and condescension since I had the honour of your notice. I know not whether I possess the more solid and

prepossessing marks of genius; I am sure I must own some of its eccentricities, though they can never interfere with my grateful sensibility of favours such as I have lately so fortunately received. Though not totally unused to praise, I must certainly feel a double elevation in any distinction bestowed on me by a personage who to the unaffected liberality of the assiduous patron, joins the partial discernment of the superior poet. I could not withhold the ebullition of my feelings after the receipt of your last letter, though I am thereby forced to commit an intrusion. I have followed Mr. Baker's directions concerning my apparel; and requested him, in addition to the many services he has done me, to return my fervent thanks to the gentlemen who, through your recommendation, honoured me with such a testimony of their attention; meantime I will endeavour to do every thing in my

power to deserve a conduct so unvauntingly munificent towards me.

"I am most respectfully, sir, your ever obliged and grateful servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground, Saturday Morning.*"

As he was now well-drest, apparently relieved from his embarrassments, and with favourable prospects opening to him, his friends entertained a hope that he would have discretion enough to make a good use of his prosperity. But this expectation was very short-lived. Within a week after he had appeared in his new clothes, as sir James Burges was sitting in the evening in his library, he heard a loud noise and a violent altercation in his hall. On going out to inquire the cause of such an unusual tumult, he found Dermody struggling with two of his servants, who endeavoured to prevent him from forcing his way into the house. And indeed his appearance was

such as completely to justify them: for he was literally in rags, was covered with mud (in which it appeared that he had been just rolled), had a black eye, and a fresh wound on his head from which the blood trickled down his breast; and, to crown the whole, was so drunk as to be hardly able to stand or speak. As soon as sir James could recognise him, he released him from the hands of his servants; and conducting him into his library, inquired the reason of his appearing in such a condition. Dermody accounted for his being so ill-drest, by saying that he had pawned his new clothes. As for his dirt and wounds, he said he had been arrested and carried to a spunging-house; where he had been drinking with the bailiffs, and writing a poem which he wished to take to sir James, but they would not let him: so that he had watched his opportunity, and slipped off: but had been overtaken by them, and obliged to fight his way; in which, though

with some damage, he had been ultimately successful. He then gave sir James his poem, which proved to be his *Extravaganza:* the uncommon beauty and elegance of which has been universally acknowledged; and which, though it might add fresh honour to the first writer in our language, was thus produced in the midst of intemperance and brutality, by a wretch in a state of intoxication, and lost to every feeling of decency or shame. As he was not at that time in a condition to be argued with, sir James advised him to return for the present to the spunging-house, and promised to discharge his debt the next morning. He accordingly sent a person with the money, and received in return the following letter.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"Sir,

"How can I sufficiently thank you for your munificent discharge of the debt I

acknowledged to you? My gratitude cannot be expressed; nor my uneasiness, when I take the liberty to assure you that the expences of my release cannot be paid until I receive the additional benevolence of two pounds. I hope in the course of a few months to repay this unexpected demand, with the sincerest thanks.

"I have the honour to be, sir, your most obliged and obedient humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground, March* 14, 1801."

It was not, however, a very easy matter to satisfy Dermody's expectations. The more he received, the more earnest he became in his solicitations for pecuniary assistance; as will appear from the following correspondence.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"IF you have ever befriended me, or wish to befriend me, you will do it at the

present moment by sending me two or three pounds, by the bearer. In case you cannot find it convenient, I leave the manuscript in your hands; but of the author you hear no more.

"Yours respectfully,

"THOMAS DERMODY*.

"28, *Strutton-ground, May 2d*, 1802."

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"THOMAS DERMODY would not have written to sir James Bland Burges, but on a great occasion. Hopes he will indulge him with two guineas: of Dermody he hears no more."

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* It is right here to state that at the time of writing this and the following short note, Dermody was, according to his own confession, in that state which learned topers (rather ungrammatically indeed) call *non se ipse*.

To Mr. Dermody.

"SIR,

"IN reply to my request of having some explanation, you send me a second letter more mysterious than your first. Pray what am I to make of the expression, 'of Dermody you hear no more'? You have experienced my friendship, and you know I am now actively employed in your service; but I must tell you, I am not to be moved by insinuations of this romantic nature. I have been, and still can be, your friend; but I must assure you, that expressions of this sort will never have the least influence upon me. If you choose to state your reason for this demand, I am ready to attend to it; but I am not to be moved by menaces of losing your acquaintance, nor am I much inclined to attend to any one who seems to prize my regard so slightly.

"I am, &c. yours, J. B. BURGES.

"*4th May* 1801."

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

" Sir,

" Though I fear I have already written but too much, yet I deem it proper to intrude somewhat more in a less *romantic* manner. It is no pleasing task to develope our faults, but at present I find it necessary. The situation in which I now reside, has been long productive of mischief to my affairs; in particular, an unavoidable association with the lowest of the human race has induced me to be too frequently guilty of that most detestable vice, ebriety. Of any other permanent one I am not conscious; but that alone, joined to the embarrassments of a very unsettled state, must be the bane of all poetical emulation. I confess, I was not quite capable of reflection when I addressed you, sir, in a style so incoherent and even ridiculous; yet my purpose must still remain unaltered. I have even from your own hands lately

received some considerable sums; yet for the above reason, and others needless to mention, they have not done all the good they ought. To change the scene must certainly be prudent; if I mean to effect any thing worthy of your protection; *now* it is impossible. My design therefore is this: to take some small lodging about two or three miles from town, where I can exert myself without interruption, and live at the smallest expence possible, until such time as the work you have so liberally forwarded may be completed. I have no money at this time, but I have a little independancy from the army of thirty-two pounds *per annum*. This has been for some time mortgaged, to pay a debt which is now cleared; and on the 24th of June I shall have seventeen pounds to receive: meantime, if I could procure only a trifle to put my wish in execution, it would be productive of much tranquillity of mind, and other advantages. These are the words

of truth and soberness: as such, I hope you will not discard them; but indulge me with one reply more, whatever may be its purport. As for conceiving that I can be so foolish as 'to prize your regards lightly,' trust me, sir, that I should be shocked even at the ingratitude, not to mention the impolicy, of the idea; whatever mistake occurred in my two notes, was the result of the weakness of the head, not the insincerity of the heart.

"I am, with great respect, sir, your most obliged and most grateful servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground, 6th May* 1801."

To this letter sir James having sent a verbal answer that he could not let him have any money, Dermody renewed his demand in a still more peremptory manner; and on the same morning a person named M'Gowan called on sir James, with a draft drawn upon him by Dermody. This sir James refused to pay, and wrote Dermody the following letter.

To Mr. Dermody.

"*Dartmouth-street, 8th May* 1801.

"SIR,

"I RECEIVED a letter from you the day before yesterday, so different from those which you had sent me before, as not only to surprise me, but to give me great concern. I cannot conceive how it is possible that a man of abilities, one who has filled the station of a gentleman and an officer, and one whom persons of distinguished literary eminence are now endeavouring to bring forward into notice, should be so lost to every feeling as you state yourself to be: should pass his time, and waste the money given him for very different purposes, in low debauchery; nay, should bring forward the names of those gentlemen in ale-houses, and should obtain money from strangers by drawing unauthorized bills on his friends for the purpose of paying an ale-house score. You will perceive by

this, that Mr. M'Gowan of Greenwich has been with me, to demand payment of the draft which you thought proper to give him upon me. I refused to pay it. I will not make any further observations on this subject, but will leave you to your own reflections. Of this you will do well for your own sake to consider: that however the favourers of literary talents may wish to support a man possessed of them, they will draw back when they find them unsupported by morality or decency of conduct; and that the bounty which is liberally bestowed upon merit struggling with adversity, will be withheld from him who, having received a more than ordinary share of it, makes new demands in a manner which may not improperly be termed menacing. With respect to myself, I have only to say that you have within these few months received from me a very great portion of what I am able to appropriate to the wants of others. I must now stop,

though I will do what I can to forward your subscription; and you will give me leave to add (what indeed I say with great regret), that any thing more than this on my part must in future depend on your own conduct.

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

"J. B. BURGES."

To this Dermody made the following reply.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"I PRESUME that even myself, when innocent, will not be condemned unheard. As you appear hurt by my behaviour, you will pardon some prolixity in a detail of circumstances that can be positively proved. The Mr. M'Gowan who has represented his case so plausibly, and who has so imprudently intruded on you, has for six years past been clerk to my agent, Mr. Lindsay;

during which time he continually drew my half-pay; and besides having been formerly with me during the expenditure of nearly each payment, and receiving many signal favours, did likewise behave towards me in the article of settlement not in the most honourable manner. Our acquaintance was not renewed till lately, and then merely by his knowledge of my too easy disposition. He called on me one evening in April, and invited me to come out; and we did unluckily, much against my immediate will, go to an *ale-house*. In my company he had never been used to pay; and I, being rather more elevated than usual, requested him to lend me some money to discharge both our reckonings, which he did. In the course of conversation, mentioning your extreme benevolence, he insinuated that I might secure him payment by giving a line to you; 'which,' he said, 'I knew he would make no use of, as I could pay him myself before it was wanted.'

On this proviso I foolishly consented. The sum I received was one pound, the order was given for two; an interest to which he had been accustomed. He saw me almost every day afterwards, and spent several hours in my company. He even brought a little packet from me to your house. One day he desired the money from me, saying 'I knew that the order was of no avail.' I told him that at the end of the month Mr. Phillips, the publisher, would pay for some communications, and he should receive the money. The matter rested until I received a note from him, desiring to know 'whether I wished him to wait on you:' to which I replied 'that it would be of no use, and therefore positively *forbade* it; but should pay him myself.' He called on me the last day I had the honour of addressing you, to announce his reception; and I was thunderstruck: I therefore *expected* your double anger. He lives in Milbank-row. Your name in

particular, and those of all my benefactors, I have ever uttered with respectful gratitude; but not in 'ale-houses:' 'low debauchery' I do not indulge in; nor, if I would *subsist*, could I be extravagant. I am unfortunate however in my connections, and a dupe: to fly from such, and be more worthy of notice, was my intent; not to extort the benevolence extended to talents, by 'menaces.' I feel highly pained at this moment, and wish my lot was not that of distress and abject dependance. But I hope my future conduct will not deserve a repetition of the censure, and that past indiscretions will (as you know most) by you be forgotten.

"I beseech you to tear or burn this, and all my last letters. I will hope that I may obtain assistance from some other quarter, to rescue me from impending difficulties; which, once emerged from, I shall never plunge into again. I think your goodness of heart will still prompt

you to assist me by your influence, towards a liberation from the bondage of the mind. Meantime I am to inform you that I am writing some more pieces to complete the volume, according to your commands; and that however my affairs may succeed, I must ever esteem myself, sir, with the greatest respect, your obliged and grateful humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground, May 12th*, 1801."

After this, it will not perhaps be thought surprising that sir James Burges was not desirous of continuing the correspondence. Dermody, however, was not easily repulsed; and the following letters will at once shew his perseverance, and the various modes by which he attempted to obtain his object.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"AT the present crisis I feel it extremely unfortunate to labour under your

slightest displeasure, as I never had so much need to request your protection. I have written some few pieces lately; but from the agitation of my mind, I am as yet unfit to transcribe them properly. Whatever infatuated follies may have formerly escaped my pen, the present application is the undoubted result of the deepest despondence. Had I any other immediate hope, I could most willingly forbear a recital of the embarrassments I am forced to encounter. It is true, I have engrossed a most liberal portion of your personal munificence, as likewise of your interest; yet from an injudicious or too hasty use of it, an unexpected demand to answer, and a fallacious dependance on other resources, I am hourly in dread of being arrested for a debt which a trifling assistance now would enable me to avert until a more propitious period. Should that misfortune take place, not only the distress but the expence would be doubled. The idea of this circumstance

has nearly distracted all my recent behaviour; and offended, if not alienated, that patronage, the forfeiture of which must be attended with the ruin of my fondest projects. Should you, sir, in consideration of my very precarious state, be inclined to serve me once more; and, by rescuing me from such a calamitous situation, to afford me an opportunity of exertion; I will evince proofs of my circumspection and prudence, perhaps sufficient to erase the memory of those temporary indiscretions which even now, were they deduced from their true cause, might appear more pardonable in their effect. Your own discernment would best point out to your benevolence what method to adopt; and I promise that such another trial of kindness so unavoidably solicited, shall not again be required during my life. Whether Mr. M'Gowan waited on you again, I cannot tell; I have remonstrated with him on the ingratitude of his conduct to me, and the

folly and impropriety of an intrusion on you, promising him payment myself when possible. I esteem it my duty to complete the materials for my work: I will therefore, if permitted, most sedulously apply myself to that task. Imploring your attention to this tedious address (which I hope you will, with your wonted goodness, pardon), and requesting the honour of your notice by a line, I am, sir, with respect, your most obliged and grateful humble servant, THOMAS DERMODY.

"*Strutton-ground, May* 18*th*, 1801."

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"As it would be imprudence in the highest degree to offer any further intrusion, after the silent contempt with which you treated my last not uninteresting application, I beg leave to premise that I

shall be guilty of it no more. As you are conscious how much your patronage may benefit me, I need not observe what sorrow I should feel on losing it; however, you will allow that being unfortunately forced to write for bread, I must make the best profitable use of my talents. At this moment I cannot tell whether you are inclined to serve me or not, or whether (as seems to be the case) you have not entirely withdrawn your countenance. Should this be the case (which God forbid!), I must own I could have no idea of succeeding by subscription. As I cannot at present go to any of the three booksellers, I cannot even conjecture how they go on. I do not rhyme for fame; my circumstances, especially at present, will not allow it. If there is no other hope of relief, no other consolatory prospect, my proposal with regard to Mr. Wright's *purchasing* (as he has commenced the business), would be the best immediate method

of enabling me to emerge from those difficulties that have nearly changed the whole temper of my mind for some time past. I must candidly confess, that from some notions of a comparative independance (that is, a meditated provision), which you hinted at in the second and third interview with which I was honoured, I fondly conceived all absolute distress was done away; and relying on this prospect, I have been perhaps rather too much elevated, too improvident. My fancy, I allow, was overheated; but in that there is no criminality. How have I otherwise offended? I often intruded on you; too often, because I conceive you to have been a munificent benefactor: I never intruded but when urged to an extremity. Perhaps a trifle *now* would make me happier than a great sum at another time; but I am conscious that I never deserved neglect less than at present.

"You will, I hope, sir, at least remove

my dread of the total alienation of your interest; instruct me in the progress of the subscription, if you have condescended to inquire; and advise me how to manage my present uncomfortable situation. Let me also sincerely and solemnly repeat the high sense I entertain of your benevolence, your affability, and eminent good-nature, not long since.

"I am most respectfully, sir, your very obliged humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground, June 3d*, 1801."

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"THE mistake of troubling you for a reply was that of the messenger, not mine; for which I humbly entreat your pardon, a circumstance for which I have had too frequent occasion lately. The mystery of your

sudden change towards me, lamented as it is by me, is inscrutable; and I can only ascribe it to some strange fatality that counteracts all my best designs. My first attracting your notice was particularly fortunate on my side, and generous on yours: since that period, my lot has been as particularly disastrous; my inevitable importunity, I fear, has been construed into want of respect, and the faults of others laid heavy on my head. This must appear, in a short time, to have been the case; as I am conscious of my high veneration for your protection, and the implicit obedience I owe to your commands. In any other situation than my present one, my conduct would appear different: but *that*, it seems, is what Cicero calls the *unguis in ulcere*; and I must needs content myself for a while, that *conscientia mille testes*. Meantime permit me once for all to mention a course of life it is necessary for me to follow, in order that I may relieve myself

from the irksome humiliation of haunting my friends with perpetual application; often fruitless, always offensive.

"*Laudatur et alget* is the proper motto at present for all works of fancy, monsters of extravagance and absurdity excepted. At such productions I am inexpert, and must therefore starve on fame. I presume, ere this you may have learnt that my assertions concerning the subscription were just; I am sorry for it, but on that account it is reasonable to look about for another mode of publication. I am most respectfully submissive to any, but think there is no occasion for the *nonum prematur in annum*. If I could but scrape together thirty pounds, would there be no possibility of some great man's being prevailed on, in addition, to assist unfortunate genius with the most inferior office? Could not the place of an amanuensis, a tutor, or a clerk, be procured? Of scribbling verses I am heartily tired. Methinks you will

acknowledge this to be prudential, though not at all poetical. Without troubling you, in defence of your ease, to order your porter to 'say you're sick, you're dead *,' I shall patiently expect your decision relative to the poems, as likewise towards your furthering the other project by your influence. No possible alteration can render me unmindful of being, sir, your most obliged and grateful humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground.*"

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"MY last letter being written under evident struggles of a spirit rendered not

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* "Shut, shut the door, good John, fatigued I said:
Tie up the knocker; say I'm sick, I'm dead."

POPE.

a little irritable by surrounding calamities, as likewise by the abrupt loss of a patronage I have been for some time taught to venerate and esteem, I cannot forbear from intruding one more explanatory trespass on your patience. To me indeed it is a matter of the most immediate concern, and I trust you will pardon my tediousness on the subject. My splenetic comparison of Walpole and Chatterton was certainly wrong: you have in every part of your conduct displayed a striking dissimilarity to the mean and ungenerous conduct of that scribbling peer; and in point of genius and erudition, in my poor opinion, there is no shadow of resemblance. A letter which I received some years ago, and which shall hereafter appear, would fully justify my abhorrence for the selfish vanity of that titled impostor, who has been nearly deified (if dullness can confer deification) by 'the mob of gentlemen who write with ease.' For his memory my contempt and hatred are immortal.

"I am concerned that you should suppose me possessed of a heart so insensibly depraved to the most disinterested acts of benevolence, as either ironically or in earnest to express 'a hope that I did not intend to libel you.' Good Heaven! for what? for your solicitude to save me? for the extension of repeated favours? I blush at the very suggestion. It is true, I have been a satirist: I hope, on the side of virtue; not of vice, ingratitude, or folly. Were I to attack your superior fame, I must belie myself: and if I have ever been sparing of my admiration of a production which has universally commanded it, it was only at that time when I had the honour of publishing my lines to you; and when, being partly dependant on your bounty, I surmised that panegyric might haply be perverted by a *good-natured* world into adulation. However, I must remark that not even your exalted station in the republic of letters could have called forth my

homage so sincerely, as the unaffected urbanity which revived my spirits on my first fortunate interview at your house. Juvenal's

> Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat
> Res angusta domi,

is my only and best apology for some apparent imprudence: I acknowledge that you had cause of offence; and regret that my circumstances afforded that cause, contrary to my desire.

"As for the poems, I must dispose of them as well as I can; though very formidable obstacles intervene. However, if they have any merit, they will be approved; if not, the interposition of even a demigod could not conceal their defects, though it might accelerate my profits. I have left the original dedication, as containing nothing that can disgust the most scrupulous modesty: the preface I have enlarged. As I am at a loss how the subscriptions already

received are to be returned, I will offer the copy first to Mr. Wright: and indeed in an age so blindly propitious to rhyming; when the vulgar puerilities of Wordsworth, the metrical perplexities of Southey, and the palpable obscurities of Cottle, so eminently succeed; it can be no violent stretch of vanity to suppose that my trifles may share the same indiscriminate favour. In case of Mr. Wright's refusal (which is pretty certain), I must seek elsewhere.

"Thus much I have sincerely disclosed my sentiments and intentions; assuring you that I shall ever retain the deepest sense of your goodness, and requesting that I may not entirely lose a small portion of your future attention and remembrance;

"I am, sir, your very obliged humble servant, THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground, July 13th*, 1801."

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"SUPPOSING, though my conduct may unfortunately have displeased you for a time, that you will still adhere to the words of the poet, who says

Æquum est
Peccatis veniam poscenti reddere rursus,

I think it part of my duty to communicate to you my publication on the death of general Abercromby *. I am afraid the composition is very indifferent, being executed in a hurry; however, you are accustomed to pardon at least my *literary* errors, else I should not have the liberty now of intruding them. I have been much in-

* This poem, with the beautiful ode which is annexed to it, was purchased by Mr. Egerton of Whitehall, for the *liberal* sum of two guineas; and they were published together soon after the death of that beloved and lamented officer.

disposed some time past, and irritated almost to death by continual disappointment. I am certainly the most disastrous fellow that ever existed; and yet, in a true light, do not deserve so much calamity and melancholy as I suffer: but such is my serio-comic destiny.

"I am, sir, with great respect and gratitude, your most humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"28, *Strutton-ground.*"

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"I TOOK the liberty to write to you a few days past, but unhappily you were not in town. It was to inform you that my poems are nearly printed, and that I hope soon to have the honour of presenting a copy to you.

"Most unfortunately, I have been placed

by the villany of a very bad man in the unpleasant situation I am now in. I have made over my half-pay for the sum for which I was arrested; but some trifling charges which occur enforce me to make an application to your wonted generosity for some immediate assistance, to liberate the author of your favoured poem of the *Extravaganza* from a prison.

"I am, with profound respect, your grateful humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"*No. 4, Debtors' Side, Newgate. Monday Night.*"

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"I HAVE the honour of sending the last portion (such as it is) of my poems, in order that you may condescend to mark those trifles you approve for publication. Being rather suspicious that I have lately

received much injury from latent and unprovoked malevolence (a method which has been formerly tried, in regard to me, on the mind of a most accomplished nobleman *, my unwearied and munificent benefactor), I feel the more anxiety at the indifference, not to say contempt, with which my late applications seem to have been received. I am unconscious of any conduct so reprehensible as to merit this coldness from a personage who so lately seemed to take a particular pleasure in conferring unsolicited favours. On this account I once more presume to request the happiness of an explanatory line; for which, if granted, the bearer will attend.

"I am, sir, most respectfully, your very obliged and grateful servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"*Saturday Morning. No.* 10, *Portpool-lane, Gray's-inn-lane.*"

* The earl of Moira.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"SIR,

"HAVING escaped from my late embarrassments, I cannot forbear deploring that such a misfortune should excite contempt, not awaken pity. Pardon me if I express some surprise at the silence in which a personage of your refined and liberal sentiment passed over the application of a young man whom you had condescended to patronize, and whose labours were at the same time publishing under the sanction of your name. Nothing but very great distress could prompt such repeated intrusion; but where may the Muse apply, if not to her own most affluent and enlightened favourites? Though at the present crisis reduced to much necessity, yet a few weeks more, I hope, will considerably alter my situation. Mean time, most respect-

fully soliciting your consideration of my case, I am, sir, with great gratitude, your most obedient humble servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"10, *Portpool-lane, Gray's-inn-lane, Saturday Morning.*"

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

"THOMAS DERMODY has in vain solicited a reply from sir James Bland Burges to his numerous entreaties. The cause he cannot divine, as he imagined sir James did not intend his displeasure to be immortal. Indeed, from a poetic mind he had more hopes of lenity than from the ordinary classes of mankind. Dermody's volume is nearly printed; and sir James will imagine his chagrin at being deprived of that personage's favour to whom it is inscribed, and from whose sanction he formed his most immediate hopes of success. If sir

James will condescend to grant Dermody a short interview, he will attend his leisure at ten o'clock to-morrow; and humbly hopes to prove the reform in his conduct, as far as his embarrassed circumstances permit.

"*Portpool-lane, Gray's-inn-lane,*
Wednesday Morning."

This request, however, sir James did not grant, though applications were repeatedly made for the same purpose: and thus did Dermody, as he had often done before, lose a friend and benefactor who had made many vain efforts to reclaim him from his follies; and to check those gross propensities which sullied his genius, and too often compelled him to languish under difficulties which an opposite course would have totally prevented, or would have incited the interest of an indulgent patron to remove. The peculiarities of his conduct will appear still more strongly marked on its being

stated, that at the very period when he was enjoying the liberal favours of sir James Bland Burges, another source of bounty was opened to him in the kind attention of Mr. Pye, and the gentlemen who compose the acting committee of the Literary Fund society. An account of the proceedings of that liberal body with regard to the applications made in behalf of Dermody, and of the attention and kindness paid him by many of its distinguished members, is contained in the following letter; with which the author has been favoured by the reverend Mr. Yates of Chelsea-college, their amiable and learned secretary.

To Mr. Raymond, Chester-street, Grosvenor-place.

"SIR,

"YOUR request respecting the particulars of the late Mr. Dermody's applications to the Literary Fund, being made after that

gentleman's decease, appears not to violate the standing regulation of the society, which requires that no disclosure or publication of name and circumstances should be made that may tend to wound the feelings of any beneficiary. I have therefore applied to Dr. Thomas Dale, one of the registrars, who has obligingly assisted me in examining the records of the fund.

"On the 15th May 1800 the following application from Mr. Dermody was laid before the committee; but a decision upon the case was deferred until Henry James Pye, esq. who had transmitted it, should be present.

SONNET,

ADDRESSED TO THE SUBSCRIBERS OF THE LITERARY FUND.

FRIENDS of the muse! who, soft as heav'n's own dew,
The secret balm of noiseless bounty shed,
And, still to Genius as to Pity true,
Nurse the pale bay that withers on her head:

Oh! may a young advent'rer woo your aid,
Young, but undaunted in pursuit of fame;
Though, deep sequester'd in oblivious shade,
Rumour's loud tongue has scarcely caught his name?
Trust me, not void of sympathy his breast,
The finer movements of the mind to feel;
And ev'n when by innum'rous evils prest,
His timid sense those evils would conceal,
Did not your gen'rous band before him rise,
Who bless the hapless bard, unseen by vulgar eyes.

" ' The author of the preceding lines ' (produced more for an introduction, than ' for a specimen of poetical talent), having ' lately encountered many unforeseen and ' inevitable difficulties, not excepting even ' the distresses of a prison, and being at ' present unconscious of any other source ' whence he might expect immediate relief, ' most humbly submits his case to the bene- ' volence of those gentlemen who constitute ' the Literary Fund; sensible that they will ' not deny to youthful emulation the re- ' quisite assistance which may forward its

'attainment of celebrity more worthy of 'their future notice.

"'Had this excellent institution been of 'a more early date, 'inspired Poesy' would 'not so soon have lost her Collins, nor the 'literary world have wept in mysterious 'wonder over the disastrous fate of Chatter-'ton. Individual patronage, however muni-'ficent, must appear casual and confined, 'when compared to the liberality of a fund 'open to the appeal of every embarrassed 'child of Merit, unbiassed by the narrow 'views of party, and unalterable through 'deviation of sentiment or critical opinion.

"'Should my encomium appear im-'pertinently diffusive, the warmth of my 'admiration must plead for my apology; 'nor could a refusal of my own personal 'application, if unworthy of redress, alter 'in the least my veneration for a society so 'truly philanthropic.

"'As my distress, though urgent, may 'be only temporary; and as I expect a work

'of mine to appear shortly, which will give a 'more copious account of my life; I hope 'the omission of a signature will not be 'deemed culpable, or admit of exception; 'but in such case, the gentleman who has 'humanely undertaken to lay my paper 'before the board, will have the additional 'goodness to supply the necessary informa-'tion.

"'I presume to copy another piece '(the shortest I can find), that it may in 'some manner have the distinguishable 'traits of a poet's petition.'

SONNET,

AFTER READING PETRARCH'S LIFE.

Enamour'd bard, whose constancy alone
Would call forth fame though tuneless were thy lyre;
Ah, with what harmony of plaintive moan
Did'st thou still watch and nurse thy Vestal fire!
By Vaucluse' springs methinks I meet thy shade,
Thy gentle shade so innocent of blame;
Still mourning for the loss of that dear maid,
While each low echo murmurs Laura's name.

O elegant of manners, how I grieve
That Love still deepest wounds the tender mind!
That still, sad fate! his tempting roses leave
In such their keenest cureless thorns behind.
For I have felt (to sacred rapture true)
Its bliss, and I have felt its torment too.

"At the next meeting (17th June 1800), the committee having received from Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Pye a more distinct statement of the poetic claims and great distresses of Mr. Dermody, those gentlemen were requested to transmit him ten guineas from the society.

"In July the following letter, further explanatory of Mr. Dermody's literary claims, was laid before the committee.

To H. J. Pye, Esq.

"'SIR,

"'I HAD the honour of your letter, 'and am not a little pained at the mistake I 'committed; however, I hope it is not too 'late to amend it. A volume of poems

'written in the twelfth and thirteenth 'years of my age, which were marked with 'much admiration; and another written 'between the thirteenth and fifteenth, in- 'cluding a translation of Anacreon's most 'celebrated odes; were published in Dublin: 'also a political pamphlet called Rational 'Liberty, several periodical productions, &c. 'In London all that has been published of 'mine is, a review of Bloomfield's Farmer's 'Boy in the London Review; two poems in 'the Monthly Mirror; and Messrs. Vernor 'and Hood are now publishing a volume of 'poems, the fifth proof of which I have 'just corrected.

"'I am, gratefully and respectfully, 'sir, your most obliged

"'THOMAS DERMODY.'

"On the 18th December 1800 Mr. Pye was requested to present from the Literary Fund to Mr. Dermody the further sum of ten guineas.

"On the 19th March 1801, the distresses of Mr. Dermody being stated to the society with much energy and pathos by sir James Bland Burges, the sum of twenty pounds was unanimously voted to alleviate Mr. Dermody's sufferings, and sir James obligingly undertook to deliver the donation.

"The week following, it being represented to an extraordinary meeting of the committee summoned for the purpose, that the last donation was entirely expended in relieving Mr. Dermody from the terrors of a prison, by discharging some demands that must, if suffered to remain unpaid, have been the occasion of depriving him of his liberty; the committee directed that he should be allowed one guinea per week at the discretion of sir James Bland Burges, for a term not exceeding ten weeks. The whole of this grant, however, was not received by Mr. Dermody; for on the 16th April 1801 the following communication was made to the society by sir James.

"'*Dartmouth-street, Thursday.*

"'SIR JAMES BURGES requests the favour 'of Mr. Baker, to make his apology to the 'Literary Fund for not attending their 'meeting to-day, which is owing entirely to 'his being still confined to the house by 'indisposition.

"'He also begs him to acquaint the 'gentlemen, that having communicated to 'Mr. Dermody their generous intentions 'towards him, Mr. D. declined availing 'himself of them; alleging that, having 'been so lately redeemed from distress by 'their bounty, it would ill become him to 'deprive others of that relief which had 'been so serviceable to himself. Sir James 'however must observe, that if the society 'would vote a small sum, and intrust it to 'Mr. Baker for the purpose of procuring 'some decent clothing for this most in-'genious person, it would be a very humane

'action, as those which he now has are by 'no means of that description.'

"In consequence of this letter, Mr. Baker, the society's collector, was directed to procure for Mr. Dermody a decent suit of clothes, for which five guineas (as a part of the last grant) was paid from the funds of the society.

"At the anniversary of the Literary Fund, 7th May 1801, William Thomas Fitzgerald, esq. who has long distinguished himself as the generous and eminently successful advocate of suffering genius;—whose liberal muse awaits with alacrity the calls of benevolence and of friendship; and whose anniversary addresses to the society have been uniformly received with grateful bursts of admiration and applause, animating even the torpid breast of avarice with a spark of their author's benevolent enthusiasm, and awakening in wealthy insensibility an attention to the sorrows and

sufferings of literary worth and learned indigence;—thus notices this unfortunate beneficiary of the society *:

Like Chatterton a gifted youth arose;
Heir to his genius, and to all his woes.
Like him, by poverty and grief oppress'd,
Peace was a stranger to his tortur'd breast;
Old in adversity, though young in years,
His scanty meal was moisten'd with his tears.
Unknown to patronage, unknown to fame,
With fainting steps to YOU the wanderer came;
YOU rais'd his head, and with parental care
Drove from his heart the demon of Despair.
Long may his gratitude inspire his lays,
And make your worth the subject of his praise!

"At the meeting of the committee on the 25th June 1801, the following letter was submitted by Mr. Fitzgerald.

"'SIR,

"'THERE are certain periods of a man's 'life, when Fortune seems anxious to empty

* "Claims of Literature, page 237."

'her whole vial of vengeance on his head. 'For some time past I have felt this by ex- 'perience. Though I have received much, 'very much indeed, from the silent liberality 'of the Literary Fund, yet a variety of 'disagreeable circumstances, chiefly result- 'ing from expences formerly incurred, have 'again reduced me to a very embarrassed 'state; in fact to such a state, that I am 'hourly in dread of a jail. You may perhaps 'imagine me one of those people to whom 'the lines of Plautus are applicable:

Plerique homines quos, cùm nihil refert, pudet;
Ubi pudendum est, ibi deserit eos pudor,
Quum magis usus est ut pudeat:

'but I assure you I am most sensibly im- 'pressed with the grateful remembrance of 'the great and repeated favours bestowed 'on me by my friends; nor do I without the 'utmost repugnance and conscious diffi- 'dence presume to solicit that source again, 'from which I have so often and so recently

'been supplied. The hope that this applica-
'tion may be my last; or at least, that any
'further intrusion may not be requisite till
'a distant period; emboldens me to ven-
'ture on a species of importunity which
'can alone rescue me from imminent
'danger; and enable me to prosecute in
'peace some works which may tend to my
'advantage, and may preclude the necessity
'of a reiterated appeal to the benevolence
'of the patrons of genius.

"'My indefatigable and excellent friend
'sir James Bland Burges being from home,
'I take the liberty to commit a second tres-
'pass on your kindness; by requesting you
'will exert your influence in the behalf of
'one who may aspire to some little portion
'of your friendship most naturally, as being
'of the muses' train, though in a very
'inferior degree of merit or notice.

"'I am, sir, your very obliged humble
'servant, THOMAS DERMODY.

'*June 18th*, 1801.

'28, *Strutton-ground, Westminster.*'

" ' *P. S.* Should sir James come to town ' in the mean time, and you chance to see ' him, I beg you will mention the circum- ' stance. I am forced to stop at home, and ' live *in tenebris*; like Duns Scotus, or a ' Rosicrusian philosopher.'

" In consequence of this letter, five guineas were presented to Mr. Dermody; but on a further application made to the society on the 15th October 1801, the consideration of this case was deferred *sine die*.

" Mr. Dermody's increasing distresses, and declining state of health, being represented to a sub-committee of the Fund early in July 1802, it was resolved that five pounds should be presented to him; this sum was the last assistance he received from the Literary Fund.

" These particulars I hope you will find sufficient to supply that want of information you lament respecting the poet's inter-

course with the Literary Fund; and at the same time they cannot but appear illustrative both of the liberality and the caution with which the concerns of the society are administered.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"RICHARD YATES*.

"*Chelsea-college, 28th October* 1805."

During the period he was enjoying the liberal favours of sir James Bland Burges and the Literary Fund, his genius attracted the patronage of the right honourable Henry Addington, then chancellor of the exchequer (now lord viscount Sidmouth), and his brother the right honourable Hiley Addington.

* By the insertion of the above letter, which throws a light on this part of Dermody's history, the author is happy to have the opportunity of exhibiting to general notice the active liberality of a most meritorious institution, the very nature of which forbids its transactions to be regularly made public, and confines it to comparatively "doing good by stealth."

It is not a less dignified than pleasing task to relate the generous actions of men; particularly of those who, though placed in stations where access is difficult, and where (as is generally conceived) complaint can be but seldom heard, can yet, amid the bustle and distraction of public business, of framing laws, and deciding on the fate of nations, consider and relieve the distresses of suffering merit.

Few indeed have experienced so liberal and exalted a patronage as Dermody, and it is infinitely to be regretted that none ever made so unwise a use of it. Unfortunately, he had so connected himself with the lowest associates, that no resolution he possessed could shake off the power which those harpies had gained over his too easy disposition. They knew his foibles; which they nourished in order to profit by them, and this they did at too large a cost. The sacrifice of his happiness was by them considered as trifling and indispensable, provided they were themselves to benefit by

it; and even character and honourable feeling (which he sometimes told them were necessary to be preserved) were, when their exigences pressed, to be given up. Such was the degrading condition to which his follies often reduced him, that he was considered by these wretches as in a state of vassalage, and by the dread of punishment to be rendered passive and obedient to their will. Sometimes he would, however, disregard their authority, and assert his independance: which he did by flying from one miserable lodging to another still more so; and remaining there till the same cause, or the terror of an arrest, compelled him to return to the former spot. Those who gained most by his weakness, were the persons with whom at various necessitous periods he lodged; and such was the power of habit, or such his fatal propensity for this kind of society, that he was continually involved with them in their poverty and low excesses. The little food he required was generally purchased and pre-

paired by them: and no regular agreement having been made, a running account was always kept against Dermody; according to which the sum he owed them might, for any knowledge he had of the justice of the claim, have been at any time one pound or one hundred.

They found this plan too profitable to adopt any other; and by keeping him always in debt, they kept him always in dread. Whenever he received a sum of money, he honestly brought it to his landlord, who always (as he termed it) "carried it to the account;" and when money was wanted and Dermody had none to give, the request was in general followed by an arrest, which frequently turned out a very profitable speculation. The fear of a prison made him importune his friends, who never suffered him to languish in confinement: and as those who had occasioned his embarrassments were his messengers during such periods, they consequently obtained a knowledge of his patrons; and

turned the kind benevolence intended to relieve him, into a source of emolument to themselves.

The natural consequence of thoughtlessness and dissipation is dependance; and as Dermody had in his exigences no other means of support than what these associates were pleased to afford him, he conceived himself bound when fortune smiled upon him, not only to discharge his debts of this description, but to bestow some signal mark of favour for the kindness thus conferred upon him while pennyless. These returns varied, according as the obligations he laboured under were weighty or trivial; without any consideration of the motive which occasioned them. At one time he might be seen in his garret in company with his hosts the cobler and his wife, and some attic lodger of equal consequence, regaling on a goose which his industry had roasted by a string in his own apartment: while the pallet-bed, which stood in a corner, was strewed with various vegetables;

the fire-side decorated with numerous foaming pots of porter; and the cobler's work-stool, boot-leg, lap-stone, &c. were commodiously placed as seats. On another occasion, in some neighbouring ale-house, entertaining the same personages with the various rarities which resorts of this description generally afford: where as the astonished guests, enveloped in clouds of smoke, sat listening with rapture to the eloquence of Dermody, the host was to be discovered in the back ground applauding with one hand, while his other dextrously scored an additional item to the bill; which, if Dermody could not discharge it during the following day, was at once put into the hands of some pettifogging practitioner of the law, and the unfortunate debtor appeared in the evening through the bars of a spunging-house, like Bajazet in his iron cage.

A singular circumstance of this kind occurred while Dermody lodged at a mean public-house in Portpool-lane. The author

had received a very melancholy epistle from him, in which he deplored his want of proper clothes to visit Mr. Addington in, as he had been requested to do on something material concerning the publication of his Ode to Peace, which in a few days after made its appearance. Business of some consequence prevented the author from attending on him at the time mentioned; and some days having passed before his leisure permitted him to supply the things required, he went one evening to apologize for his apparent neglect, and to mention that the necessary articles were ready. On entering the house his ears were assailed by violent plaudits and huzzas, which appeared to issue from the attic story. Having little curiosity to inquire into the cause of these extraordinary rejoicings, he only requested to see Dermody. The good woman of the house quickly dispatched a messenger to give the proper information: and the author

was soon ushered into a room, at the top of which sat Dermody in a new suit of clothes, surrounded by half a score of the landlord's smoking-acquaintances; the table strewed with tobacco, pipes, and a plentiful flow of wine and spirits; and the sideboard loaded with bottles, the late contents of which had left the members of this elevated society in a state of equal jollity and confusion.

The entrance of the author damped the joy of the meeting: and Dermody, who well knew that the look which accompanied his appearance in the room was a just rebuke for the impropriety of *his* conduct, began to frame an apology; which being little attended to, he flew into a rage, and repeated the following lines:

"When wit's wild flashes wreathe a smile,
Dimpling on Bacchus' blushy cheek;
Or when, gaunt sorrow to beguile,
Outrageous peals of humour break;

"If then, all furrow'd o'er with frown,
With mad-cap jollity at odds,
You strike each quaint chimera down,
A fiend amid the laughing Gods;

"Go to the tabernacled clan,
Who drone devotion through the nose,
And hide with pray'r *the inward man*:—
I herd not with such imps as those.

"If your pure palate is so nice,
That ev'n in frolic's festive hour
You can't endure a little vice,
To sweeten life's eternal sour;

"'Fore heav'n! you'll find no saint in me,
From *passion*'s furnace glowing hot;
And as for prim hypocrisy,
Hypocrisy! I know her not."

It was, however, soon discovered that the honourable Mr. Bragge had presented him with the clothes, as well as the money which was thus imprudently lavished upon vipers whose rapacious appetites, could they have by that means derived equal gratification, would have preyed on his vitals.

It was the author's custom on such occasions to give him a severe lecture; which frequently finished with a strong injunction not to approach his apartment till he had

acknowledged his improprieties, and made promises of amendment. An injunction of this kind generally produced a remonstrance like the following.

To Mr. Raymond, 293, Piccadilly.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I HAVE been infinitely unhappy in incurring your just displeasure. You will distract me if you continue your anger; but to hinder any other similar offence, I give you my honour, *my oath*, I will not taste a glass of intemperate liquor for these ten months to come. My Poems are to be commenced this week; I shall be busy in correcting the proofs, and must be attentive. You will perceive how good I shall be. In the course of to-morrow I shall finish some lines on the death of lord Moira's brother, the honourable G. Rawdon; and wish to get their insertion insured in the Monthly Mirror. How could you be so severe in your note? though indeed I deserve it, I am sure. I can't tell when I shall have

sufficient assurance to face you; but I think you will forgive me, and lose such vile folly in utter oblivion. I have not, by heavens! been drunk but twice or thrice, and unhappily have seen and shocked you each time; but if it ever occurs again, I give you liberty to use me equal to my demerits. I stopped all the night before last, and yesterday, at Mr. Allingham's chambers; and could not apologize till now. I am ashamed to sign my name; though it is better to acknowledge, than persist in, error. Pray let me hear from you.

"Your obliged and grateful

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"*P. S.* I expect to get some money from a gentleman in the course of the week; but I am in so much want of the stockings and shoes you so kindly ordered me, and which I so foolishly pledged, that I can't stir out *. You know I am very

* A few days previous to writing this letter, Dermody had dined in Piccadilly; when the author, per-

much in your debt; and had I not been drunk and mad, could not have the impudence to ask you for money: but if you can procure me a coat and waistcoat of some kind, and send me the duplicate of the stockings and shoes, you will, my good friend, much oblige me. As I certainly, for the world, would not approach

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ceiving his shoes and stockings to be in a very bad condition, sent and purchased a pair of each, which Dermody put into his pocket with the intention of wearing them the following morning. The next evening, however, he made his appearance without either shoes, stockings, hat, neckcloth, or waistcoat; and in a state of intoxication not to be endured. He had pledged the shoes and stockings, got drunk with the money, and in a fray in the streets had lost his other necessaries. He entered the house in this state, told his tale, threw on the floor the duplicate of the articles he had pledged, demanded other apparel, was refused, swore a few oaths, threatened to destroy a sideboard of glass, alarmed the whole family, was turned out of doors, and during the remainder of the night took shelter in a shed fitted up for some cattle in one of the fields leading from Westminster to Chelsea.

you yet, and as it is too far to send your servant, I wish you could send me them with a note, by some messenger or other, a stranger. Recollect my asseveration of amendment, and forget what has past at this particular crisis. T. D."

The avarice of those persons with whom he lodged, was more vexatious to him than even the importunities of want. Neither the bounty of his patrons, the sacrifice of health, nor the casual supplies afforded him by the exertion of his talents, could release him from their persecution; and the reflection that his indigence kept him continually in their power, often drove him to commit those wild extravagances which generally ended in riot and intoxication. By their nefarious schemes he was kept in perpetual poverty; and being without that necessary caution and knowledge of the world which teach men to guard against the snares of deliberate

villany, his short and eventful life was made one varied scene of calamity and distress.

These excesses, however, began at last to shake his constitution. He frequently felt much pain and inconvenience from an asthmatic complaint: and being told that it would prove fatal to him if he continued in his course of dissipation, he began to think it was time to reform his way of living; which he very speedily accomplished, though not without some formidable struggles.

To the reputation of an excellent poet, he had now added that of a powerful satirist: which was at this time fully established by the publication of his Battle of the Bards, an heroic poem in two cantoes, written in one day; on the whimsical conflict in the shop of Mr. Wright the bookseller in Piccadilly, between Mr. Giffard, author of the Baviad, and the celebrated Peter Pindar. As this poem is now very scarce,

the following extracts from it are given as a specimen of his skill in humour as well as satire.

"*PRÆLUDIUM.*

"COURTEOUS READER,

"THAT laborious and learned commentator, Fabricius Flatbottombergius, in the 2479th page of his Hypercritical Treatise on the Diet of Wild Asses, printed at Amsterdam, in fifteen volumes folio, proveth in a most concise and perspicuous manner, that every great and momentous work (such as an epic poem of this species certainly is) should, as to its origin and tendency, be made as intelligible to every faculty as circumstances will admit; and that the author is bounden by every rule of right reason, to elucidate its subject or theme as far as in him lieth. At this epoch of Ignorance, when all her children may exclaim *redeunt Saturnia regna* (that is, 'the leaden reign returns') indeed, it is

much to the poet's own interest, especially in any more grave or lofty composition, to explain such sublime (or, as the vulgar call them, obscure) passages, as may occasionally present a stumbling-block to the less vivid imagination. With this view we have diligently perused the diurnal chronicles, a trial of no small endurance; and in the following not unnecessary extract, hand down one of those ephemeral prints to latest posterity: for without vanity (a vice we abominate), the *opus exegi* might be aspired to without any imputation of egotism, except from the ill-judging and ill-natured.

" ' A rencontre took place on Monday, ' in the shop of Mr. Wright the bookseller ' in Piccadilly, between the celebrated Peter ' Pindar, and Mr. Giffard author of the ' Baviad. We need not inform our literary ' readers' (*i. e.* readers of letters), ' that in ' reply to many sarcasms thrown out by ' Peter Pindar against the author of the

'Baviad and other poems, Mr. Giffard lately 'published a severe and keen satire against 'Peter. In a second edition, an allusion is 'made of a kind too gross for decency to 'record. This literary combat on Monday 'produced blows' (a very bad *production*). 'Doctor Walcot, going into the shop of 'Mr. Wright, where Mr. Giffard was seated 'reading a newspaper (perhaps one of these we so highly honour), 'asked him if his 'name was not Giffard. He replied in the 'affirmative. Upon which the doctor aimed 'a blow at his brother-poet with a cane, (here we have availed ourselves of the *licentia poetica* in our work), 'which Mr. 'Giffard dextrously warded off' (admirable dexterity!); 'and in an instant' (amazing celerity!) 'broke the head of his assailant' (inhuman severity!) 'with his own stick. 'Mr. Peltier' (supposed to be the Pantagruelian Frenchman) 'and another gentle-'man interfered: and Peter, with a bloody 'sconce' *(quis temperet a lachrymis?)* 'was

'thrust into the street; where a mob col-
'lected, to whom he made his appeal. He
'had lost his hat in the affray' *(non benè relictâ parmulâ)*, 'which was thrown out
'to him; but the author of the Baviad'
(non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo) 'kept possession of the cane, as a
'trophy of his triumph.'—Morning Advertiser, *cum notis variorum.*

"Such is the narratory outline, and (metaphorically to speak) simple basis, of our aspiring structure: which we have with so much intellectual cost embellished; and which, it is to be devoutly wished, may in time arouse the sleeping energies of universal emulation. For, pleasurably as we contemplate our own mental achievements, we wish not, with supercilious arrogance, to annihilate the humble effort of another: this being ever in memory; that we are the original, the *principium et fons*, of heroical composition. We had nearly omitted to mention, what is confidentially

whispered, that our ingenious contemporary and cousin, monsieur Von Kotzebue, is assiduously employed in dramatizing so memorable a transaction; and from his former very extraordinary evidences, we are emboldened to predict indubitable success.

"A friend whose scruples seem rather too formal (we shall not call them conscientious), inveigheth bitterly against our making Peter Pindar the most prominent figure on the canvas: and accuseth us of following the example of that republican reprobate John Milton; who hath, in an out-of-date of his, chosen for his hero no other than the arch-devil himself. Whereas we scorn to tread in the same path with any man, much less condescend to copy *such* a master; so little studied by persons of taste, and so much unknown to the fashionable world, whose opinion on literary desert we venerate almost to idolatry. But even allowing our apostacy to such vile

imitation,—is it possible that John Milton, a precise puritan, who hath written a long apologetic oration proving his innocency of frequenting brothels (a recreation which in our days demandeth not even an excuse *en cavalier*),—is it, we repeat again, possible for him to mislead, or contaminate, or pervert, a pupil of modern philosophy; which is founded on infidelity alone, and a fervent renunciation of *all* belief? insomuch that the existence of diabolism is no more credited, except by old wives and young children, than the renowned legend of Tom Thumb."—

"Moliere very sagaciously observeth, that every man can make a dinner with money, and the same observation holdeth good in poesy: but I pray thee, gentle reader, out of thy courtesy, to resolve me what man (saving indeed a magician) can brew Thrale's entire from turnip-tops, be they ever so delicious; or forge a long poem of twenty days from an occurrence

of half an hour, be it ever so delightful? Nathless, on this head, trust me, manifold and grievous will be the complaints of divers shrewd wits and notable critics against this our poem; touching its deficiency of episode, simile, thunder, tempest, metaphor, pathos, *et quid non?*

"We might (with that truly epic historian Henry Fielding, when apologizing for the paucity of sculptorial matter on the vertex or top of Mr. Andrews's cudgel) allege that all these, and much more, should have been inserted, had there been sufficient room: but all we shall say is, if any of those same cunning clerks and perilous poets conceive or opine they can indite a more delectable heroic, may God give them grace to know it; and may they be conscious of their own great ability, timely to profit thereby!

"Respecting the harmony of our versification, and the modulated energy of our periods, we doubt not, could Scaliger arise

from the dead, that he would transfer the compliment he bestowed on *certain lines* of Virgil (whose Georgics he devoured with as much avidity as the modern commentators do a Norfolk dumpling) to *the whole* of our performance: namely, that 'they were to his palate sweeter than Hyblean honey;' or, more familiarly to express his meaning, 'sweeter than sugar-candy.' We therefore have laid ourselves under the most sacred and irrefragable injunctions, not to answer one objection of any headstrong self-opiniated curmudgeon; being well apprized by the observation of a sly predecessor who (though some will not allow him fancy) did not want for sense, that

> ——'break one cobweb through,
> He spins the slight self-pleasing thread anew:
> Destroy his fibs or sophistry, in vain;
> The creature's at his dirty work again.' *

* Pope.

"As for those addle-pated cavillers who read, run, and condemn, without consulting the genius and spirit of their author; or even considering that some books are to be tasted, some swallowed, and some thoroughly digested; we value their nugatory strictures at a nutshell.

"Several illustrious foreigners, and particularly three most erudite emigrants from Catalonia (viz. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; all formerly doctors of the Sorbonne, and joint-members with the illuminati of Germany), having in the politest manner proffered their estimable services to inspect, correct, and dissect, these our labours; we have prudently adjourned our more diffuse annotations (contenting ourselves with cursory remarks) until the period appropinquateth of the sixteenth edition, which cannot be very far removed: when we shall likewise present thee, thrice-benignant reader, with a capital representation of this signal combat,

to be engraved by an eminent butter-print maker from a painting by Mr. F——i, executed in his most felicitous (*i. e.* most horrific) manner, he having kindly engaged to eat a double quantity of raw pork on the occasion; and moreover an accurate map of the seat of war, taken on the spot, and reverentially inscribed to a certain princely personage, alike the impartial Mæcenas of poetic or pugilistic merit, *tam Marte quàm Mercurio*."—

"And now, beloved reader, having first smoothed thy mustachioes, currycombed the wrinkles from thy forehead, and furbished up the most festivous notions thou canst hustle together, humbly do we beseech thee to fall to; for in sooth thy *grace before meat* hath been rather long-winded. *Vale!*

"M. M."

" *THE poet commenceth with a most pertinent but puzzling question, which seemeth to sink him into a most sublime quandary; and sweareth a most dreadful oath that he must procure a muse.*

" WHERE 'mid the tuneful spinsters can I find
One nymph to pugilistic charms inclin'd?
Has ever muse, unmindful of her state,
In Pindar's fountain wash'd a broken pate?
Or grave Melpomene, in contest high,
Discharg'd her blue-rag at Thalia's eye;
While Bacchus held the bottle, and the Sun
Delay'd his patent coach to smoke the fun?
Yet, though unskill'd to batter or to bruise,
By all the Gods! I must invoke a muse:
For ne'er, in garret perch'd, may warbling wit
Presume that useful lady to omit;
Till lawyers curse their clients, quacks their fees,
Till taylors kick their cucumbers and peas,
Till nobles pay their debts like vulgar men,
Till droops the British flag, and 'Chaos comes again.'"

" *Apostrophizeth, and curiously inquireth the origin of such animosity between sir Peter and sir Gifford.*

" SAY then (for thou the dread event must know),
What anger levell'd the immortal blow?
What against Gifford urg'd sir Pindar's rage,
Or arm'd sir Gifford against Pindar's age?

Unequal match'd, a dubious doom they prove;
Blameful alike, but such the will of Jove *!

" What direful deeds from trifling causes spring!
A bastinadoed bard, or exil'd king.
What fell effects from wayward errors flow!
A numscull shatter'd, or a nation's woe."

" *Pathetically laments the evil effects of a mistake; and unravelleth the mysterious cause,* à principio, *of sir Peter's rage.*

" Here (but the nicer epic rule denies
That quaint old-fashion'd trick, to moralize)
Could I through many a pensive page deplore,
And sighing dip my raven-quill in gore;
Tell, through mistake, and heedless of a check,
How fine Phaëton broke his comely neck;
Tell, through mistake, how minions of high place
In eight years slaughter drench'd the human race;
Tell, through mistake for Merry-Andrew fit,
How each poor playwright deems himself a wit;
Tell, through mistake, and mindful of third night,
How mimes, instead of acting, dare to write;

" IMITATIONS.

* " Dios d'etelieto Bowlè!—*'Omeroy Iliad.*"

Scribblers erroneous other dolts forsake,
And libel their dull selves—the worst mistake:
For from a mere mistake, perversely wrong,
Rises this lofty argument of song.

"Long had sir Pindar, of unrivall'd might,
To Momus' birchen chaplet prov'd his right;
Long had his satire prob'd each pompous sin,
And stripp'd each rhyming Marsyas to the skin *;
But, lo! all slovenly his uncouth lay,
His powers so nervous dwindle to decay;
No more by sense approv'd, or folly fear'd,
The nauseous dregs of driv'ling age appear'd:
Scarce one bright spark illum'd a dreary line;
Mirth doz'd, and Malice caught the lucky sign;
Yet Candour pitied still, with liberal mind,
The tuneful Belisarius, old and blind."

"*Describeth the appearance of a strange monster which exhibits itself monthly, and displayeth the bardivorous appetite of this ferocious animal.*

"Hast thou not heard the undisputed fame
Of those great sheets that note an author's name?
Hast thou not kenn'd those furious beasts of prey
That hunt lank poets in the eye of day,

"* Phœbus went further with poor Marsyas, for he stripped off the skin itself. A tender-hearted deity!"

And rav'nous on their fleshless members feed?
Not fiercer Afric or Hyrcania breed *.
Oh! hast thou not, in shaggy vesture blue,
Beheld that monthly monster, a Review;
Wont every garret, horrible, to scour,
Bloodier than bum, aye seeking to devour?
A hungry tiger of this horrid crew
(To the rank scent of carrion ever true)
'Upturn'd into the air his nostril wide,'
And from afar the drooping minstrel spied;
Forth from his lair loud thunder'd critic law,
Then clapp'd on Peter his tremendous paw.
Whole pamphlets in his ireful mood he tore;
Fresh-bleeding sonnets strew the letter'd floor;
Meek eclogues murmur, strangled in the birth;
Lampoons inflammatory load the hearth;
Sad elegies their swan-like requiem breathe;
Pert epigrams, still lively, smile in death;
Soft am'rous odes their balmy fragrance shed,
And heap the desk with mountains of the dead.
Hence stern debate, hence anger ferret-ey'd,
Wolvish dissension hence, and leopard pride;

"* Quale portentum neque militaris
Daunia in latis alit esculetis;
Nec Jubæ tellus generat, leonum
Arida nutrix.—Hor."

Hence bulldog battle, monkey malice hence,
The mule's deep sullens, and the ass's sense;
On every side wild blaz'd the wrathful soul,
And either ink-stand bled at every hole."

CANTO I.

The second canto opens with a humorous description of night; during which the poet makes a ghost relate to Peter the disasters of the following day, "at one o'clock:"

"When close by Peter's couch a goblin stood;
Goblin robust, as though of flesh and blood:
Thrice twitch'd his night-cap, thrice his pillow shook,
Thrice pull'd the coverlid, and mournful spoke *."

After this the apparition makes some pertinent remarks on Kearsley the bookseller (a friend of Peter's), Opie the painter, Mrs. Cosway, and West; then asks,

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"* We had many scruples about our ghost's using *Peter* instead of *Petros*, as Homer supposeth the Gods to speak Greek; but as the laureate had not been long dead, we conceive in that short time he could not forget his English."

"Hear'st thou not snort the famish'd steeds of
Stubbs?
Haunt not thy vermin'd dream sir Joseph's grubs?
Skip not his boil'd fleas, buzzing in thine ear?
Or Butler's meteor-wig dost thou not fear?"

This whimsical ghost now warns Peter of his fate, rouses him from his sleep, and vanishes; then,

"Clad in a suit of second-mourning hue,
Uprose the morn, and uprose Peter too*.
Wan as a death-hunter's his visage frown'd,
And wild he cast his rueful eyes around;
His eyes, where feebly shone a rushlight ray,
His wistful eyes, 'that witness'd huge dismay.'
Yet fell revenge, impatient of controul,
Yet injur'd talent, stung his stormy soul;
Yet Warton's voice his learned zeal alarm'd
(Tenacious of the saw, 'fore-warn'd fore-arm'd');
And seizing a stout twig his grandsire bore,
He cough'd,—and issued at the postern-door †.

"* Uprose the sun, and uprose George the Third."—Peter's *Lousiad*.

"† The very worst door in the house he could have issued from: *vide* Homer, where Hector makes his last exit. But some modern city scholiasts differ in opinion."

Returning never with Pindaric pride
Shall he triumphant o'er its threshold stride;
But on the steps, with loose dishevell'd hair,
Shall sit, unwelcome visitant, Despair."

Here the poet takes a view of Piccadilly, St. James's, &c.: and after paying some compliments to the Bond-street loungers, makes his hero approach towards the shop of the bookseller; where,

—" DEEPLY studious, in an easy chair,
His choler meeken'd, and compos'd his air;
Warn'd by no vision of th' impending stroke,
But smiling heedless at each passing joke;
Ill-fated Gifford sat. The shelves around *,
Convulsive, gave a hideous groan profound;
The Baviad thrice, in sympathetic pain,
Open'd its filial leaves, and clos'd again;
The parrot burst her cage, loquacious fowl!
And on the chimney perch'd the mystic owl:
When, lo! dilated into tenfold might;
In breadth a hogshead, and a tow'r in height;

" * For an illustration of the prodigies, *vide* Homer, Virgil, Statius, and Aristotle's Masterpiece. Wing's Almanac is not amiss."

In rush'd the bulk of Peter. Muse benign,
Still louder swell that penny-trump of thine:
For ne'er did tilt of prowess'd Charlemagne,
Or craz'd Orlando, claim a nobler strain;
Though his mad capers meet the general view
In half-a-hundred cantoes, mine in two."

"*Peter's Theban uncle, and Milo the bullock-bruiser, noticed.*

"Not Peter's uncle, yearly when he came
To tune his crowder at th' Olympic game;
Not he (though Theban chaps were rather stout)
E'er saw or sung so terrible a bout:
Though Milo with one formidable box
Split the rough cranium of a bellowing ox;
Peel'd off the hide to save his feet from thorns,
And pick'd his teeth at supper with the horns."

"*The Combat.*

"'Is Gifford here?' the maniac minstrel cried;
Gifford 'Lo! he thou seek'st is here' replied *;
'From thence then take thy ferry o'er to hell.'
Right on his sconce the sturdy sapling fell:
His sconce impenetrable scorn'd a wound;
But hollow rung, and gave a mournful sound †;

"* *Ecce! quem quæritis adsum*, &c. VIRGIL."

"† The *hollow* sound which Homer placeth to the account of the armour, is here properly transferred to the *scull*. *Quantum inest rebus inane!*"

While horror bristled up his wond'ring hair,
And strain'd each muscle to an iron stare.

" As when, instead of tipping half-a-crown,
Some powder'd bully knocks his barber down;
Or to a bard some patronizing duke,
Instead of twenty pounds, returns his book;
Or to some beau a bailiff in the pit,
Instead of choice rappee, presents a writ;
So Gifford star'd (and so perdie would you),
And writh'd, and scratch'd, 'and wist not what to do.'
Stupid awhile he stood; and ey'd the foe
With frozen glare, a monument of woe:
Till, blown by gusts of rage, his ebbing blood
Foaming came back, spring-tide, a roaring flood.
And now his shoulders to the work he lays,
And now the blow at *cent. per cent.* repays.
Dire blow! that threaten'd ruin to his brain;
And all its embryo-brood, a harmless train:
For there unfledg'd the young ideas rest,
Like callow birdlings in a cuckoo's nest."

"*The Cyclops.*

" If thou hast e'er th' Etnean depths explor'd,
With molten rocks and flaming lava stor'd;
Where old Empedocles once bruis'd his rump,
Popp'd from its sultry summit—no bad jump:
If thou hast trac'd that celebrated hole;
Nor sing'd thy beard, nor burn'd thy slipper-sole:

Then hast thou seen at an infernal heat
The one-ey'd brethren on their anvil beat;
Quaff down like purl, amid their maudlin tricks,
Full pots of Periphlegethon and Styx;
Then well-refresh'd their noisy trade renew,
And bang till e'en the fire itself was blue.
So, capable king Harry's mail to crack *,
Associate fists keep time on Peter's back;
In 'regular confusion' they descend,
And Parthian prentices at either end
Discharge their coward cuffs, and partial succour lend.

" Had not thy ribs (a seas'nable relief)
Been compass'd with a triple coat of beef,
Had not its valiant surloin fill'd thy breast,
By heav'n! thy patience ne'er had stood the test;
Though patience was thy only plaster then,
Most patient of the fretful sons of men:
For, lo! like Bajazet, to please the rout,
The victors in now turn the vanquish'd out †."

" * Read the battle of the angels in Paradise Lost, and make no unfair or invidious comparison: *fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.*"

" † See the apostrophe in the Eneid on Pallas's leathern girdle being taken by Turnus, as Peter's cane was."

" *Peter is vanquished, and flieth:* Sic transit gloria *Monday!*

" DISCOMFITED, deject, with bleeding brow,
Alarm'd, his fav'rite mob forsake him now;
Yet 'gainst yon fatal shop that caus'd his pain
He hurls his unappeasable disdain.
Some 'great revenge' he plans; and frames the fall
Of master, counter, prentices, and all:
Glorious emprise! then, mindful of his head,
He groans, and surly seeks a 'pothecary's shed *."

The following fragments will not less gratify those who delight to trace the progressive exertions and improvements of so extraordinary a genius as Dermody's. By such they will, no doubt, be highly valued: as they afford an opportunity of comparison with sketches of a similar species written in his earlier years; when his imagination was probably more vivid, and his judgment less matured.

" * *Et gemitu, fugit indignata sub umbras.*—VIR."

ON DRAMATIC SIMPLICITY OF SENTIMENT AND DICTION.

" I HAVE long thought that an absurd imitation of Shakspeare's antiquated phraseology, has been in some measure the cause of our entire declension from simplicity in the later productions of the stage.

" Our modern drama is generally an heterogeneous contexture of quaint expression, insipid pun, and unnatural fustian; communicated in that species of style which Dryden not unhappily denominated ' prose run mad.' Much as I admire the figurative boldness and lofty conceptions of our literary ancestors, I am not yet enthusiast enough to allow them purity of language. Every person acquainted with the most famous authors of Elizabeth's time, will acknowledge that a boastful display of pedantry was too often substituted in place even of the common tongue as then current. The historian and the philosopher were no

less guilty of this false taste than the poet, as is evident from the elaborate pages of the great Raleigh and the greater Bacon; who, with a cumbrous luxuriancy of learning, have rendered some of their choicest compositions either metaphorically turgid or metaphysically obscure. The wild scheme of Sydney (though the politest scholar of his age) to ingraft the Roman on the English idiom, is sufficiently ridiculous in its ill success; and few have followed an example so preposterous and extravagant. It is indeed rather wonderful, that the prose writers of this reign are the most obsolete and affected; and that Spenser, who from the nature of his subject might have taken the greatest liberty, is in reality (antiquated as he may seem to some people) the chastest, and of course the most classical, among them.

"In the sprightlier days of Charles, so much had the introduction of French phrases prevailed, that it almost threatened

final extermination to the old hereditary Saxon; and the language became a flimsy patchwork of Gallicisms, as it had just before been of Greek and Latin innovations. I have frequently, at the present more advanced period of cultivated diction, considered it no small disgrace to the invention of our countrymen, that we are forced (certainly through indolence or caprice) to copy from our neighbours almost every scientific term proper to the mechanic or military art; and even the fine wits, 'the mob of gentlemen who write with ease,' esteem it a vast accomplishment to interlace their productions with this pilfered tinsel.

"Though I confess Addison's style to be a perfect and delightful model, yet I cannot help thinking that the world has been extremely and deliberately unjust to the primary exertions of Steele. I not only admire his periodical lucubrations for their fortunate exhibition of versatile fancy, for their easy and polished humour, and for

their superior excellence of ethic admonition: but I likewise applaud him as the manly restorer of scenic decency of plot, interesting not intricate; and of dialogue sprightly though not splendid. The sentiments of Cato are confessedly elevated and noble; but, alas! too far removed beyond the sphere of common life: while even the most censorious must allow that there is that moderate emulation of virtue still remaining sufficient to impress any spectator not totally callous, with a respect and love for the beneficent, affable, and elegant character of Bevil.

"Swift may be impartially placed in the highest rank for his clear sententious gravity, and the unembarrassed brilliancy of his conception; which could render the thorny path of disputation agreeable, and enliven the severity of politics with captivating emanations of genuine wit: but being in no degree connected with my design, his beauties can be only mentioned and admired.

—I now return to my principal object, the drama and its children; whose perfections I shall endeavour, in a cursory way, to discriminate, and point out for imitation.

"The immortal Shakspeare, from the narrow limits of his education, and original habits of life, must necessarily have adopted many vulgarisms and low conceits, very improper for a modern to copy; and as for his happier and sublimer flights, they are indeed inimitable. Jonson's comedies, with all their merit, are so laboriously stiff; and the joint compositions of Beaumont and Fletcher, with all their wit, so insufferably licentious; that I can select from the whole dramatic galaxy of these times, but one author who is not quite exceptionable as to regularity and moral precision. This is Massinger. His incidents are generally well conducted; his unities regarded with much attention; his characters delineated in a masterly and forcible manner; and his dialogue, con-

sidering the age in which he wrote, remarkably chaste and nervous. I am surprised that more of his plays are not revived and adapted for representation: which they might be with very little trouble, and less expence; as they are seldom loaded with pageantry and show.

"Theobald, whom Pope with more malice than justice chose for the unfortunate butt of his satirical spleen, has written a play which I think could be still successfully introduced to the stage. It is in the style and manner of Shakspeare, to whose pen Theobald himself attributed it; alleging that he had merely altered a few passages in the manuscript, and presumed on some trivial addition. The hero, who is frantic, has a very striking likeness to our modern Octavian; but whether the ingenious author of the Mountaineers was aware of the fortuitous resemblance, I cannot pretend to determine.

"There is another composition which I

have formerly read with much pleasure, a tragedy entitled the Fatal Extravagance; but I do not know its author's name, nor did I see any affixed to it. It is full of simple pathos deeply affecting, and no inconsiderable painting of domestic sorrow. Why are so many jewels suffered to lie buried, when the town is so often deluded with empty glitter and evanescent frivolity? One would almost suppose that the nation consisted only of a race of laughing philosophers, from the paucity of tragic productions; or were in fact so completely miserable in their own gloomy situation, that they could afford no room for the admission of fictitious misfortune.

"Though I cannot reconcile myself to that strange jumble of smiles and tears, levity and anguish, which constitutes a tragi-comedy, or what we more emphatically term a *play*, (first, because the introduction of the comic must always weaken the energy of the tragic part; and

secondly, because the emotion of different passions at one moment, as in an hysteric, is not *in itself* pleasing;) yet I must give the palm to one whose two great productions are thus huddled together, as 'the poet of the heart.' This intellectual sovereign is Southerne; whose Isabella and Oroonoko must charm as long as the human breast can feel, or the human passions can be interested.

"I know that those authors who countenance tragi-comedy the most, aver that it is a true and faithful delineation of the checkered scenes of real life; no indifferent plea in its favour. Yet Dryden, who was himself an adept in the practice, lays the blame on the distempered and vitiated taste of the audience; and even Southerne, in a prologue, has these lines:

'You see we try all shapes, and shifts, and arts,
To tempt your favours, and regain your hearts;
We weep and laugh, join grief and mirth together,
Like rain and sunshine mix'd in April weather.'

Capricious indeed were the good critics of their time who could prefer rhyme to reason, who extolled 'the Spartan Dame' and 'the Fate of Capua' beyond 'Isabella,' and were better pleased with 'Don Carlos' than the 'Venice Preserved' of the same author. After all, I confess that the more vulgar scenes of Isabella are necessary and natural, and that those of Oroonoko are conducted with much ingenuity throughout; but what reader of sensibility who can pity perverted genius, will not be concerned at the expiring quibble which the poet has so unluckily put into the mouth of the honest unrepining Aboan?

'I had a *living* sense
Of all your royal favours, but this last *(meaning the dagger)*
Strikes through my heart.'

In this piece I could, on a strict perusal, remark many more deviations of this kind from Nature and her expression; but the

whole is so animated, so eloquent, so sublime, and yet so simple, that it would be a sort of censorial stoicism to quarrel with trifles.

" What can I say of Otway; the plaintive, the tender, the soul-distracting profligate Otway: who, by some secret magic can bid us at one moment pity and detest, scorn and admire, and shed the sympathizing tear over the fall of vice itself? To omit Venice Preserved, of which the hero is a factious cut-throat, and the second character an uxorious, treacherous, whimpering coward,—let us turn to the Orphan. Not to say that Monimia is an exact semblance of a longing, irresolute, boarding-school girl; Chamont an ungrateful hot-headed bully, deserving to be cashiered from any regiment; and Acasto a mere walking old gentleman; how horrid, how absurd, is the fraternal compact! and how blameable the professed hypocrisy and deceit of Castalio; who will not own that

he is justly punished, yet does not deplore that punishment in the end! This is the skill, the fancy, the irresistible witchery, of the poet: that elicits light from darkness; and averts the dazzled eye from deformity, by a soft insinuative enchantment of verbal delusion. Take away sentiment and diction, pathetic expostulation, and the voice of nature personified, how will the splendid fabric vanish, and what shall we discover but licentiousness and disgust beneath this veil of roses! Such are the charms of appropriate and energetic language.

"The author of Douglas, in our own days, has received great and deserved encomium. He was certainly initiated in the school of Southerne, and is particularly happy in the choice of his materials; yet, strange as it may appear, some of his incidents bear no slight resemblance to those in a very whimsical comedy. It is wonderful that this similarity, though quite unimportant, has not been observed by

those who have either seen or read the Rehearsal. Old Norval in the one and the Fisherman in the other, are the same; there are a casket saved, and a prince discovered. It may be no unentertaining employ to compare both performances, to remark the association of ideas in different minds, and to be convinced how nearly our loftiest efforts may be allied to the burlesque; and I leave this task to the curiosity of the reader. Douglas is certainly the last boast of the buskined muse that I have seen, or expect to see during the present democracy of pantomime.

"There are a few plays now entirely laid by, or perused only by the friends of true dramatic taste, which I shall beg leave to enumerate and recommend; more for their purity of style and correctness of execution, than for those poetical beauties which they so eminently possess. Such are Fenton's 'Mariamne,' Hughes's 'Siege of Damascus,' and Frowde's 'Philotas'

and ' Fall of Saguntum.' The last two are admirable examples of strong patriotic sentiment, and evince very extensive powers of declamation. Whitehead's ' Roman Father,' though not entirely discarded from the modern stage, is in many places tedious and tame: the catastrophe is too shocking even for the galleries; the death of a sister by a brother's hand is not calculated to inspire admiration (the object of the poet), and on the whole it is much inferior to Brooke's ' Gustavus Vasa.'

" As it would appear even somewhat ridiculous to class a poetical maniac among those sons of the legitimate drama whom I have proposed as worthy of imitation, I have reserved Lee for the last. He was certainly a man of an amazing fancy, whose very extravagances would set up a dozen of our peddling playwrights; but it is my business to elucidate his perfections, not his faults. His Theodosius, to ' talk big' in his own manner, is prodigal of beauties:

the character of Varanes, the lover, is finely conceived and delicately finished; nor is the rough warlike bluntness of old Marcian without its peculiar charm. It is to be observed, that the scene between Theodosius and this honest veteran, has given rise to two more of the same complexion: one between Antony and Ventidius, in Dryden's 'All for Love;' the other between Juba and Syphax, in Addison's 'Cato.' They are all equally excellent. His 'Rival Queens,' on account of a mad hero, well suited the abilities of a mad poet, and there are various beautiful touches through the course of the piece; yet (what is very wonderful, considering its showy decoration, triumphal entry, and magnificent banquet) it is but rarely performed.—In my opinion also, amidst all its wild horrors and bloody preparation, there is much good writing in a play of his entitled 'Lucius Junius Brutus:' and I do not fear to support this judgment even at the present

period; when the playhouse is a complete sepulchre, filled with hobgoblins, monsters, devils, and monkeys."

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE REV. JAMES DELACOUR,

AN ELEGANT THOUGH NEGLECTED POET.

"RAISING the remains of genius from obscurity, is no undelightful task to a contemplative and benevolent mind. I confess myself charmed with the slightest discovery of this nature; and were I sure of sitting by the little hillock which covers the dust of Henry Fielding, who lies in the Factory's burying-ground at Lisbon, I would not grudge the fatigue or expence of journeying thither. When in Canterbury some months ago, while my companions were admiring the height and magnificence of its cathedral, or decyphering the inscriptions on the tombs of lazy monks and lethargic friars,

I was more jocundly employed in ruminating on the fallen state of the old Chequer inn, where honest Geoffrey Chaucer revelled with his train of pilgrims, knights, clerks, and Oxford scholars. This pleasing propensity has excited me often towards inquiries which others would disdain as trivial; and the following sketch, imperfect as it is, is one vein of intelligence traced by my curiosity.

"The reverend JAMES DELACOUR was an inhabitant of Cork; and much caressed for his sprightly wit and moral conduct, beauties which are very rarely united. His first published poem was entitled the Prospect of Poetry, inscribed to Boyle earl of Orrery, and introduced by complimentary verses from several respectable writers of the day. Though rather too impetuous and fiery (a sad prediction of his future destiny), it contains some passages surprisingly beautiful and sublime; the measure is harmonious, the design uniform though

not new, and altogether it is a performance of infinite merit. His description of the birth of Love is replete with tender and elegant conception. Mr. Bell, in his compilation of fugitive poetry, has very judiciously retained, indeed I may say revived, this piece.

"His Progress of Beauty (which is, I suppose, very scarce in this kingdom) is far superior to lord Lansdowne's verses on that subject and with the same title. His Epithalamium also has all the delicacy and sweetness of Catullus. But, alas! all human endowments are variable; and the sage of this day has often been the ideot of the next.

"Poor Delacour, at an earlier age than his unrivalled countryman Swift, was a member of society no more. All his once vivid faculties had fled, and all his myrtles were blasted. I assign him the myrtle, because like Lee, who too lost his reason, his chief talent lay in chaste amorous de-

scription. The person from whom I received my small information, has frequently seen him in the open street with a mob of boys round him, pouring forth extempore lines, chiefly satirical; and has not unfrequently remarked some bright but evanescent flashes of fancy amidst his wildest delirium.

"Even during the long period of Delacour's insanity, the light of the poet was not totally extinguished. I have seen a manuscript copy of verses on the earthquake at Lisbon, composed in some serener moment, full of lofty but extravagant conception. From what I can learn, he produced about the same time some little pieces which appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine, then the repository of wit and genius; and in particular some lines to the author of the Seasons (which inspired even the leaden pen of old Dennis the critic), and an humorous epitaph on a

tallow-chandler who bequeathed ten pounds to reward the best tribute to his memory.

"When expatiating on the productions of a poetic mind while labouring under the horrors of actual derangement, I cannot pass in silence the disastrous fate of Christopher Smart. Who that has perused his prize-essays on the Attributes of the Deity (scarcely inferior to the hymns of the Divinity's own minstrel, the divine Milton); his picturesque description of the hop-garden; or his Hilliad, a most admirable burlesque on sir John Hill, the botanist, and editor of the Inspector; but must deplore the melancholy destruction of such combined erudition and talent? Who could imagine that such a person would allow his name to an insipid prose translation of Horace; or degrade his fame by a metrical version of Phædrus, unworthy of a school-boy's pen? While in confinement for his malady, he likewise versified the Book of Psalms; and it is remarkable that though

many illustrious writers have chosen that task, none succeeded much better than Sternhold and Hopkins, whose tuneful excellence may rest in peace without any injury to their palms of honour.

"I should be very sorry to hint that every good poet should not be as good a Christian; nay, he should more particularly exert his abilities to the glory and praise of that benignant Being who deigned to bestow them: but certain it is, that when once a refined intellect (as too frequently occurs) is haunted by the terrible phantoms of superstition as well as by the delusive shadows of fancy, both unite their force, and overturn the throne of reason. A mind thus distracted may be compared to the ruins of an ancient monastery; through whose stained glass, and fantastic portals, even the blessed light of heaven enters only to checker the gloomy aisles with imaginary forms, and strew the dun walls and mutilated pavement with sombre ap-

paritions of terror. Poetry, being in itself of an enthusiastic nature, requires not to be inflamed by any adventitious means: its own mental source is sufficiently replete with informing spirit; and the writer who, in a wild luxuriance of imagination, oversteps the limits of rational devotion, will, unless a miracle should interpose in his behalf, die either an infidel, a fanatic, or a fool."

ON SIMILITUDE OF EXPRESSION AND SENTIMENT IN DIFFERENT AUTHORS, AND THE IMPROPRIETY OF REPROOF ON SUCH PASSAGES.

(In a Letter to a Friend.)

"THE last time we conversed together, I recollect that you would not agree with my opinion of two very celebrated works which, though translations, I endeavoured to prove more than equal to their mighty originals. These were Dryden's Eneid and Pope's Iliad. I still persist that they

have improved, illustrated, and aggrandized, even by their deviations, the boasted works of Homer and Virgil. I am only sorry that the translators had not changed their authors: that Dryden, whose natural genius was bold, lofty, and gracefully negligent, had not adopted the Iliad; and Pope, whose harmonious numbers, polished correctness, and regulated fire, are unrivalled, had not chosen the Eneid. I likewise remarked as an excellence in Dryden, one thing which has been generally decried, and which in original composition would be scarcely pardonable. This is the frequent repetition of the triplet: which, when the sentence concludes with it, is majestic and noble; and even when it does not, affords more ample scope for the comprehension of the poet. Dryden, certainly on this account, not seldom introduees lines of fourteen syllables in the course of a long narration or harangue; and I am disposed to think they

strengthen and variegate the unbounded flow of his versification.

"I now advance another opinion, which I suppose you will deem equally fantastic and singular; that different authors may hit on the same sentiment and expression without the least imputation of 'picking and stealing,' or meriting the odious name of plagiarists. The truth is, that all good compositions are merely imitations; if not of the works of man, of the works of nature. To what purpose do we study, if not to apply? But there is a vast difference in the modes of application. A person may cull a rose, and not root up a whole bed; and an author may transplant a fine flower from a barren soil, and improve it. This is not a robbery committed, but a benefit conferred.

"There are however a set of imitation-hunters, who will not allow the justice of my observation; as it hinders them of much malicious amusement, and debars them

from imputing to an author various transgressions which he never dreamed of. These strange animals, who batten on scraps but hate the full banquet; who have the eyes of the lynx to imperfections, and the mole's blindness to beauty; are not satisfied with being displeased themselves, but must make the world so likewise. All productions of the fancy are at best but so many agreeable delusions; and why should I thank a screech-owl for awakening me from a fairy vision to some miserable reality? According to such people,

'Garth did not write his own Dispensary,'

and we should analyse every little pleasure that comes in our way; which would be as ridiculous as anatomizing our meat before we sit down to dinner.

"The foregoing is a prelude to some resemblances of this sort which have lately occurred to me; and though I must own they startled my opinion at first, yet I was

resolved, previous to mentioning any such discovery, to intimate my total dislike of those gentlemen who are on the watch for faults as a spider is for flies.

"You remember, when perusing Fenton's tragedy of Mariamne, we were both struck with the beauty of the passage which describes the queen's parting with her son:

'Awhile she stood
Transform'd by grief to marble, and appear'd
Her own pale monument.'

We endeavoured at that moment to trace a faint likeness of Shakspeare's Patience; but do not you think the following still more apt and striking?

'Stetit ipsa sepulchrum;
Ipsaque imago sibi, formam sine corpore servans.'
Cyprian.

"The soliloquy of Herod in the same play beginning with 'Where's the monarch now?' is a beautiful parody throughout of king Henry's

'O polish'd perturbation, golden care!'

and not very much inferior.

"I discovered a passage in the Turkish Spy, when I was very young, from which Sterne took the hint of his 'recording angel;' but though I am positive of the circumstance, I cannot now recal to mind the page in which it may be found.

"I am surprised to hear many men of extensive reading, commending the effusions of Peter Pindar for originality of measure and rhyme, and the pleasing irregularity of his style. I lament that his humour has for its objects temporary affairs, as some of his odes have great merit: but those who cry up his *originality*, have never seen Hall's Tales of Crazy-castle; who was himself not a little indebted to La Fontaine, that sprightly fabulist.

"You have often heard me, in my projecting manner, mention a design of rescuing those caitiff bardlings who fell under the lash of Pope, from the splenetic

but immortal obloquy of his Dunciad. Their punishment was too severe: many of them had talents; besides which, their tyrant made no distinction of his victims. Cibber's comedy is very fine: nor was he an indifferent scholar; as appears from his first publication, the Life of Cicero; and his Apology, which Swift so much commended. You know how Pope was obliged to beg pardon for his mistake in regard to Aaron Hill, whose recriminatory verses prove him to have been no dunce. But above all others I lament the fate, and deny the dullness, of Leonard Welsted; a young man whose imitations of Horace are particularly happy, and whose ode of 'the Genius' touches the true sublime. Pope's mean vanity, and deception of Steele, in regard to the paper on pastorals in the Guardian, intended to depreciate Philips's, shew that his own moral conduct was capable of stain, and deserve to be recorded with infamy.

"There is a love-tale by Welsted, entitled Acon and Lavinia, from which Thomson may have borrowed the charming episode of Damon and Musidora; and what he says of beauty's being 'when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most' has some analogy to Welsted's following lines:

'The Persian loom and glitt'ring tissue scorn'd,
She boasts more envied graces unadorn'd.
No aid from cost she needs; for Nature's care
With a free hand indulg'd her to be fair.'

The idea is the same, but not equally simple, in both; and neatness of expression often sets off a thought to more advantage than the most laboured comment. A pretty miniature picture is more admired than a portrait at full length, if it is well and delicately finished *.

* "Thomson is also not a little indebted for some descriptive parts of the Seasons, to his countryman Gavin Douglass's prologues to his translation of Virgil."

"Every one has heard the various discussions of Gray's metaphor 'redolent' applied to 'joy and youth.' Welsted has 'fields redolent of spring;' and I believe both have made free with a line in Dryden's Fables, where the word was first used in a figurative sense.

"Much noise has been made by the critics about Gray's

'Towers with midnight *murder fed*,'

and the epithet would be certainly less improper to a flock of wolves; but why has not Virgil's '*picturâ pascit inani*' been equally censured?

"As I have referred you to what Welsted has lent, I now select two elegant lines which appear to be partly borrowed. He says of Titian's mistress:

'Through its fine progress all her shape he trac'd,
Deduc'd in soft proportion to the waist;'

which you will allow is Prior's

'Fine by degrees, and beautifully less,'

only a little altered and enlarged.

"As I have spoken so much of this Mr. Welsted, I shall take the liberty of concluding this epistle with a few verses which I penciled on a blank leaf of his book: not indeed *currente calamo*, for there was no *calamus* in the case; but really on the spur of the moment:

'While Ovid in thy verse so chastely charms,
The courtly wit of wiser Flaccus warms;
On thy bold Genius stooping from the skies,
Illustrious bids the awful hero rise.
In vain malicious satire blasts thy fame,
Youth of obscure but not ignoble name!
For all the petty feuds of party o'er;
Mean prejudice, and Pope himself, no more;
The page that could such modest worth assail
Shall blush, and ev'n the mighty Dunciad fail.'

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

(In a second Letter to a Friend.)

"I resume the subject of a former speculation; not from any high sense of

its immediate utility, but from a confirmed opinion that such researches are not undelightful to an inquisitive mind, and often lend a refined relish to elegant and extensive reading.

"There are innumerable selections and volumes of extracts in every language, but more particularly in our own, which, at the same time that they alleviate the severities of intenser study, supply ample food for the imagination, and furnish intellectual improvement by retail. Among all these, one by the ingenious Vicesimus Knox has been peculiarly applauded for perspicuity of design, and brilliancy of execution *. I accede to its general merit, and am happy at the reputation it has deservedly attained; but am much surprised that a compiler of such judgment and taste, in a work intended for a model of juvenile composition, should copiously insert the turgid insipidity of

* The Elegant Extracts in Verse.

Ogilvie, and quite overlook the charming effusions of his more highly gifted contemporaries. Instead of Langhorne's Visions of Fancy, I should propose the same author's Fables of Flora; which are extremely fanciful, and have perhaps suggested the personification of all the amorous and vocal vegetables with which we have lately been entertained. The department allotted to the reception of old ballads, &c. is managed with much accuracy, and I should be glad to perceive the spirit of perusing

'Those venerable ancient song-enditers'

revived. They certainly do not rival the harmony and glaring ornament of our modern productions; but what they lose in refinement, I conceive they gain in simplicity and pathos. An instance of this I shall beg leave to adduce from an old lamentation affixed to the history of Fair Rosamond. On the whole, it is a very

wretched canticle: but I am no fastidious reader; and often, like the Spectator, have found amusement in the lining of a band-box, and genius disguised amidst the ribaldry of Grub-street. Describing queen Eleanor's savage treatment of the lovely unfortunate, after having unravelled the mystic mazes of the bower, the writer breaks forth from the very depth of dullness, into the following pathetic and truly poetic lines:

'Then thrice she dash'd her on the cheek,
So dyed double red;
Hard was the heart that gave the blow,
Soft were the lips that bled!'

There is a particular energy in the word 'dash'd;' the conceit in the second line is fortunate and striking; and the final exclamation is most unaffectedly tender and delicate.

"You perceive, my dear friend, that I am not rigidly adherent to my first topic; and that I have been led away, as usual,

with that extravagant but pleasing sorceress called Fancy by some and Whim by others. However, I will now strive to come closer to the point proposed, and lay before you those *mighty* discoveries I have lately made.

"You recollect the celebrated sentiment in Edwin and Angelina,

> 'Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long;'

but I do not recollect that any person has informed the world that our friend Goldsmith was indebted to Dr. Young for it:

> 'Man wants but little, nor that little long.'
> *Night Thoughts.*

"Do not think me so ungrateful as to presume at violating the manes of that gentle and genuine son of sympathy Yorick, if I declare I was somewhat startled about the authenticity of my Uncle Toby's oath, when I met a similar ejaculation of a very dissimilar character in the tragedy of

Tamerlane; where Bajazet cries out, over the dead body of Arpasia,

'No, she shall not die.'

"Perhaps the classical propriety of an epithet in one of the most spirited and admirable odes of Collins, has not been as yet minutely ascertained; at least, the fashionable *crops* of the present day can have but a very indefinite idea of its singular derivation. You will no longer then wonder at the description of

'The youths whose locks divinely flowing,
Like vernal *hyacinths* of sullen hue,'

being particularly applicable to the Spartans; when you consider that, according to Ovid, they paid divine honours to that unfortunate favourite of Apollo, and were extraordinarily partial to the flower which bore his name. The metaphor is, indeed, rather far-fetched, and my interpretation a literary *capriccio*; but I think this curious association of ideas

was actually working in the poet's head at the moment when he wrote the above lines. The passage in Ovid's Metamorphoses is to the following effect:

'Nor are the Spartans, who so much are fam'd
For virtue, of their Hyacinth asham'd;
But still with pompous woe, and solemn state,
The Hyacinthian feasts they yearly celebrate.'

"I do not at present call to mind any more small critical occurrences in this way; and indeed we may well say with the epigrammatist, '*Nos hæc novimus esse nihil:*' but I shall take the liberty to inquire of your superior discernment, whether (during the rage for translation from the most stupid of all jargons) the following eminent Latin authors, some of whom flourished in the golden age of poesy, would not be worthy of our nearer acquaintance in an English dress. I mean Vida; whose Art of Poetry has been done great justice to by Pitt; but whose Christiad, Silkworm, and

Game of Chess, (the latter of which has been imitated by Pope in the Rape of the Lock,) have fallen into worse hands, and whose charming Eclogues have not been attempted at all. Politian; the purity of whose style approaches the Augustan in its happiest period of perfection. Buchanan; whose *Fratres Fraterrimi* must always be deemed a noble specimen of animated satire, not to mention the characteristic grace and suavity of his smaller pieces. Mantuan; whose pastorals were formerly read in the schools of this kingdom, as are Virgil and Horace now; and abound with many exquisite scenes of natural beauty, though they have given place to their betters, and are very seldom mentioned but by the few. I would also recommend a version of Vaniere's *Prædium Rusticum*, which contains many delightful passages. Some performances in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, from which collection Boileau formed an exalted notion of English genius, are like-

wise deserving of that compliment; and I would wish to know why the *Culex* of the immortal Virgil, though a minor production, has escaped the accuracy of his various and elaborate editors.

"I dread, my dear friend, the imputation of pedantry; though I pique myself on a liberality of opinion which to some will, I doubt not, appear preposterous, perhaps ridiculous. But it was ever my principle to judge and discriminate for myself; to despise the unmeaning clamour of the million; to assert the plea of insulted or forgotten merit, in whatever climate or century it might have arisen; and it shall likewise be my fondest wish, to establish the splendid temple of Critical Taste on the solid and impregnable basis of eternal truth."

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF WILLIAM BROWNE,

AN OLD ENGLISH POET.

"HAVING in a small collection of my poems, lately printed, quoted two passages from this very ingenious but much unknown writer, it may not perhaps be unpleasing or unprofitable to take a short survey of his life, which has been left so long buried in obscurity; accompanied by a few remarks on his eminent powers of fanciful description, and the simple but energetic delicacy of his pastoral compositions. As the unmerited oblivion which attends this great genius precludes any minute disquisition, so his entire history may be comprised in a very small space; and it will be scarcely believed that we can find no trace of an edition of his works (except one) since the usurpation of Cromwell, though he had been highly commended by the learned Selden, and was an adopted

favourite of the proud but judicious Ben Jonson.

" It is stated on good authority that WILLIAM BROWNE was born at Tavistock in Devonshire, in the year 1590; his father, according to Prince in his Worthies of Devon, being probably of the knightly family of Browne, of Browne's-Islash in the parish of Langtree near Great Torrington. After he had passed through the grammar-school, we find him at Exeter-college in the university of Oxford, about the beginning of the reign of James the First; where he became celebrated for classical erudition, and for his knowledge in the belles-lettres nearly unequalled: thence however, before he had taken any academical degree, he removed to the Inner-temple, where he more assiduously devoted himself to the muse.

" In the beginning of the year 1624 he returned to college; and was appointed tutor to Robert Dormer, afterwards earl

of Caernarvon, who lost his life at the battle of Newbury on the 20th of September 1643. On the 25th of March 1624, our author received permission to be created a master of arts; though the degree was not conferred upon him till the November following. In the public register of the university he is styled, *vir omni humanâ literaturâ, et bonarum artium cognitione, instructus*. After he had left college with his pupil, he was gladly received into the family of the munificent earl of Pembroke, who entertained a great regard for him; and in that situation he made his fortune so well, that he had it in his power to purchase a comfortable independance. The precise period of his death cannot be ascertained, but, according to Wood, it may be fixed with most certainty in the year 1645.

"Such is the account transmitted to us of this excellent poet. His Shepherd's Pipe consists of seven eclogues; among which is an admirable monody entitled

Philarete, written upon the death of his friend Mr. Thomas Manwood. This was certainly the model from which Milton did not disdain to borrow the idea of his Lycidas. There is another production of Browne, entitled the Inner-temple Masque, to which I imagine the world is equally indebted for Comus. These distinctions alone ought to have placed Browne in a more favourable light, for assuredly the divine author of Paradise Lost would not have condescended to copy an indifferent original at any time.

"But I mean to confine myself more particularly to the notice of this author's chief performance, entitled Britannia's Pastorals. I shall make no observations upon his miscellaneous pieces, but only recommend them indiscriminately to the attention of the reader.

"The design of these Pastorals is perfectly original. They profess no imitation of any ancient or foreign writer: and are meant solely as a compliment to our own

country; which is placed in happy competition with that famous haunt of demigods, Arcadia itself. The style is harmonious and flowing, diversified with a pleasing assemblage of new and captivating imagery; and even the measure is sometimes changed not for the worse, as it administers a kind of metrical relaxation that relieves the fancy by variety without violence.

"To exemplify this assertion I must transcribe a few passages which, considering the time when they were composed, will be found not destitute of elegant thought and polished versification. The following address to a river-deity contains both these qualities, in my humble opinion:

——'May first
(Quoth Marine) swaines give lambs to thee;
And may thy floud have seignorie
Of all flouds else; and to thy fame
Meete greater springs, yet keep thy name!
May never euet, nor the toade,
Within thy bankes make their abode!

Taking thy journey from the sea,
Maist thou ne'er happen in thy way
On niter or on brimstone myne,
To spoil thy taste! This spring of thine,
Let it of nothing taste but earth,
And salt conceived in their birth.
Be ever fresh! Let no man dare
To spoil thy fish, make locke or ware:
But on thy margent still let dwell
Those flowres which have the sweetest smell:
And let the dust upon thy strand
Become like Tagus' golden sand.
Let as much good betide to thee,
As thou hast favour shew'd to me.'

BOOKE I. *Song* 2.

"Nor do I think the following short extract inferior to any of our old poets in point of conception:

'Neare to this wood there lay a pleasant meade,
Where fairies often did their measures treade:
Which in the meadow made such circles greene,
As if with garlands it had crowned beene;
Or like the circle where the signs we tracke,
And learned shepheards call't the zodiacke.
Within one of these rounds was to be seene
A hillocke rise, where oft the fairey queene

At twilight sate, and did command her elves
To pinch those maides that had not swept their shelves.
And further, if by maiden's oversight
Within doores water were not brought at night;
Or if they spread no table, set no bread;
They should have nips from toe unto the head:
And for the maid that had perform'd each thing,
She in the water-pale bade leave a ring.'

IBID.

"The sublimity of this exclamation will, I hope, be a sufficient excuse for its insertion:

'What muse, what Powre, or what thrice-sacred herse
That lives immortall in a wel-tun'd verse,
Can lend me such a sight that I might see
A guilty conscience' true anatomie?
That wel-kept register wherein is writ
All ils men doe, all goodness they omit:
His pallid feares, his sorrowes, his affrightings;
His late wisht had-I-wists *, remorceful bitings;
His many tortures, his heart-renting paine;
How, were his griefs composed in one chaine,

* Had I known. So the old sayings "Beware of *had-I-wist*;" and "A wise man never says, *I did not think of that.*"—Mayor's Proverbs.

And he by it let downe into the seas,
Or through the centre to the antipodes,
He might change climates, or be barr'd heav'n's face,
Yet find no salvè, nor ever change his case.'

IBID.

" The preceding extracts are quoted to convey some idea of the general tenor of the work. I shall next introduce a few unconnected sketches of more than ordinary beauty, and then presume on no further intrusion than a cursory critique in the most concise manner.

" A musical concert of birds is thus most fancifully though quaintly depicted:

' Two nights thus past, the lilly-handed morne
Saw Phœbus stealing dewe from Ceres' corne.
The mounting lark (daie's herauld) got on wing,
Bidding each bird chuse out his bough and sing.
The lofty treble sung the little wren;
Robin the meane, that best of all loves men;
The nightingale the tenour; and the thrush
The counter-tenour sweetly in a bush;
And that the music might be full in parts,
Birds from the groves flew with right willing hearts.

But, as it seem'd, they thought (as do the swaines
Which tune their pipes on sack'd Hibernia's plaines)
There should some droning part be: therefore will'd
Some bird to fly into a neighbouring field
In embassie unto the king of bees,
To aide his partners on the flowres and trees;
Who, condescending, gladly flew along
To bear the basse to this well-tuned song.
The crow was willing they should be beholding *
To his deep voice: but being hoarse with skolding,
He thus lends aide;—upon an oak doth climbe,
And nodding with his heade, so keepeth time.'

BOOKE I. *Song* 3.

"Every mind susceptible of the charms of natural description, will coincide with my sentiments on the excellence of the subsequent two very opposite, but equally well-delineated, landscapes.

'These pitchy curtaines drew 'twixt earth and heaven:
And as Night's chariot through the air was driven,
Clamour grew dumb, unheard was shepherd's song,
And silence girt the woods; no warbling tongue
Talk'd to the echo; Satyres broke their dance,
And all the upper world lay in a trance.

* Beholden, indebted.

Onely the curled streams soft chidings kept;
And little gales that from the greene leafe swept
Dry summer's dust, in fearfull whisp'rings stir'd,
As loath to waken any singing bird.'

BOOKE II. *Song* 1.

'The muse's friend (grey-eyde Aurora) yet
Held all the meadows in a cooling sweat;
The milk-white gossamores not upwards snow'd,
Nor was the sharpe and useful steering goad
Laid on the strong-neckt oxe; no gentle bud
The sun had dryde; the cattle chew'd the cud
Low-level'd on the grasse; no flye's quicke sting
Inforc'd the stone-horse in a furious ring
To tear the passive earth, nor lash his taile
About his buttockes broad; the slimy snayle
Might on the wainscot (by his many mazes,
Winding meanders, and self-knitting traces)
Be follow'd, where he stucke his glitt'ring slime
Not yet wip'd off. It was so early time,
The carefull smith had in his sooty forge
Kindled no coale; nor did his hammers urge
His neighbour's patience: owles abroad did flye,
And Day as then might plead his infancy.'

IBID. *Song* 2.

"These are only the *disjecta membra poetæ*; for indeed, to do any diffuse per-

formance proper justice, it should never be taken by piecemeal, or exposed to public inspection by lines and sentences: yet if there is no other method at first of rescuing its merit from obscurity, even this mode of selecting a few specimens may be not unworthy of approbation.

"The good taste of the present day has been highly favourable to pieces executed in the simple style of pastoral, as the liberal reception that the Farmer's Boy has deservedly received very amply testifies: which contains a profusion of exquisite images, enriched with the highest colouring; though perfectly chaste, and never distorted by a gaudy extravagance. Though I may be suspected by many of having a singular turn of thinking, I declare that I have imagined various instances of corresponding genius between William Browne and Robert Bloomfield; not forgetting this natural difference and advantage, that the former was a profound and accomplished scholar.

But what I remark as a coincidence in them is, an unaffected felicity of calling forth new objects from the level scene of life, with a harmony of style and expression peculiarly fortunate.

"The poets of Elizabeth's reign piqued themselves on a pompous display of learned acquisition, nearly approaching to pedantry. It was an established custom to introduce the heathen mythology on every occasion; and even so late as Waller and Lansdowne we can trace the progress of this absurd fashion, which in the infancy of English poetry was more pardonable. Now, in our enlightened era, a person who should crowd his pages with a motley contexture of Grecian demigods and heroes, would merit the derision of the judicious: and even the frequent invocation of the muse, a being whom we acknowledge merely ideal, having lost its primary attraction, though not yet entirely discarded, is unnatural and unhappy; unnatural from the improbability

which it casts on any grave subject, and unhappy from the obsolete insipidity of the fiction.

" Browne's pastorals are not very faulty in this respect: the ancient fables which he does, at times, allude to, are not the most hackneyed; and his main story is at any rate, as I mentioned before, entirely his own. His allegories are not so intricate as those of his contemporaries: they are picturesque without perplexity, and savour more of the school of Tasso than of that of Spenser. Yet there are two of his personifications which would not perhaps disgrace the sublime pencil which dashed out the wild horrors of the cave of Despair; I mean Riot, in Book I. Song 4.; and Limos (or Famine), in Book II. Song 1. We there descry all the bold and poetical conceit of Ovid in the favourite parts of his Metamorphoses, without those minute and laborious touches which seldom come from the hand of a great master. Salvator Rosa

might have here satisfied the luxuriance of his imagination, without restraining his enthusiasm.

"It is certain that our most inspired children of Fancy did not dwell, in patient apathy, on the niceties of composition. What can be more fervid and engaging than the irregular graces of Collins? who was a professed admirer of our old bards; who made them his chief study, and even forfeited the estimation of all but the congenial few through a desire of indulging in these rapturous excursions. There are some (and those by far the most delicious) of his odes, which to a common plodding reader would appear verging closely on the confines of absolute insanity; but I am much deceived if they appear so to the man whose 'eye,

'in a fine frenzy rolling,
Glances from heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n.'

I may likewise assert, that one of the most exquisite little poems we can boast,

entitled a Hymn to May, was written by a man (William Thompson) whose fancy was fed with the pure honey of Browne, and who revised the only modern edition of his works. This hymn, so much deserving the notice of every elegant reader for the voluptuous tenderness of its language, though composed after the ancient model, is to be found in the Poetical Calendar published periodically some time ago by Fawkes and Woty; in which some other pieces of considerable value are included.

"I know of no two productions more worthy of revival by some man of influence and fortune, than this which I have attempted to draw into a fainter degree of notice from its long unmerited oblivious recess, and the piscatory eclogues of Phineas Fletcher; whose Purple Island, though inferior, has been favourably regarded by some late commentators of literary eminence.

"I am conscious that this slight effusion of the applause secretly nourished since my earliest days, is both desultory and incorrect; yet I wished to make known a mine to which I have been indebted for much intellectual treasure. I now quit my task, far from being finished, with particular regret; transferring it to the care and abilities of some abler hand: and shall conclude with another quotation.

'Looke, as a lover, with a ling'ring kisse,
About to part with the best half that's his,
Faine would he stay but that he feares to do it,
And curseth time for so fast hastening to it;
Now takes his leave, and yet begins anew
To make lesse vowes than are esteemed true;
Then sayes he must be gone, and then doth finde
Something he should have spoke that's out of minde;
And whilst he stands to look for't in her eyes,
Their sad-sweet glance so tye his faculties
To thinke from what he parts, that he is now
As fane from leaving her, or knowing how,
As when he came: begins his former straine,
To kisse, to vow, and take his leave againe;

Then turnes, comes back, sighes, parts, and yet doth goe,
Apt to retire, and loathe to leave her so *.' "

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* Dermody's opinion of this excellent poet is fully justified by that of Ben Jonson in the following copy of verses, printed in the year 1616, and not to be met with in his works.

"*To my truly beloved friend, William Browne, on his Pastorals.*

"Some men, of books or friends not speaking right,
May hurt them more with praise than foes with spight.
But I have seen thy works, and I know thee;
And, if thou list thyself, what thou canst be:
For though but early in these paths thou tread,
I find thee write most worthy to be read.
It must be thine own judgment yet that sends
This thy work forth; that judgment mine commends.
And where [*whereas*] the most read books on authors' fames,
Or (like our money-brokers) take up names,
On credit, and are cozen'd; see that thou,
By offering not more sureties than inow,
Hold thine own worth unbroke; which is so good
Upon the exchange of letters, as I wou'd
More of our writers wou'd like thee not swell
With the *how much* they set forth, but the *how well*.

"BEN JONSON."

Dermody was, however, at this time in a more deplorable condition than he had been in for many months. He found his applications, wherever they were made, disregarded; and his health so much impaired, that a change of air was absolutely necessary for his recovery. Having lost the esteem of many who had liberally and frequently relieved his wants, and being in daily dread of further persecution from those persons whom he had so often pampered, he formed the resolution of freeing himself entirely from a connection which now, at too late a period, he felt to be both degrading and destructive. To effect so desirable a change, money was wanted; and unfortunately he had wearied the generosity of even his warmest friends. The earl of Moira was in Scotland, and therefore immediate relief could not be expected from his lordship. He had slighted Mr. Bragge, and highly offended sir James Bland Burges. The members of the Literary Fund had so

frequently attended to the applications made in his behalf, that any further demand in that quarter he deemed imprudent for the present.

He had likewise neglected his last generous patron, Mr. Addington; nor was he less culpable with regard to the interest which that highly esteemed gentleman's brother took in his pursuits and advancement. Mr. Addington, as Dermody has himself acknowledged in the following lines, not only relieved his wants, but endeavoured to correct his errors: condescending to advise him; and, but for his fatal negligence, doubtless willing to have pointed out a path where prudence and the exertion of his talents would have secured him fame and independance. But he disregarded alike the admonition of those distinguished benefactors, and the prospect of future greatness; and thus again sunk into contempt and poverty.

EXCULPATORY LINES
TO ATTICUS *.

Quo quisque est major, magis est placabilis ira;
Et faciles motus mens generosa capit.—OVID.

"By what strange fate great talents are allied
To greatest faults, whose judgment can decide?
Whether the finer fibres of the brain,
Intensely bent, and stretching ev'n to pain,
Relaxing, may too frequently require
Fresh fuel for the intellectual fire:
Or that rash genius, in its wild career,
All-devious visits each eccentric sphere;
And, conversant with fancied forms of air,
Mocks the cold caution of terrestrial care;—
Now, bravely borne on seraph-wing sublime,
List'ning th' eternal systems' choral chime †;
Now 'mid the gloom of central Hades hurl'd,
Groping the rayless dungeons of the world;
Anon with more effulgent face to rise,
And sun-like travel through serener skies,
Till vile Intemperance, of hideous birth,
The struggling pinion chains to native earth,

---

* This name, in all his writings, he applied to Mr. Addington.

† "The music of the spheres." POPE.

And reason's spark, irregularly bright,
At length exhausted sinks in mournful night.
How sad the wreck, the triumph how malign,
When Vice allures the muses to her shrine;
Round her black brow when roses are entwin'd,
And demons revel o'er the ruin'd mind!

"In vain for *causes* would stern prudence seek,
But of the dread *effect* all ages speak;
While on full many a minstrel's doom severe,
Relenting pardon streams th' eternal tear.—
Though 'mid the guilty but illustrious band
My humble name unknown must never stand;
Though little praise, alas! to me is due;
Would I deserv'd so little censure too!
Deeply impress'd th' unpleasing theme I feel
Which conscious blushes, spite of pride, reveal:
Yet, sooth'd once more by thy absolving smile,
Enrag'd compunction's scorpion-sting beguile;
And find my soul from sensual bondage free,
Tutor'd by Virtue, Atticus, and thee."

Dermody was not here totally forsaken; Mr. Hatchard the bookseller received instructions from Mr. Addington to print and publish a volume of his poems which was at this time preparing for the press.

This liberality was truly honourable to the feelings of his patron, to whom his follies and imprudence had justly made him in some measure obnoxious; but his poverty and his fatal illness now rendered his days and nights heavy and burdensome, and it was hoped that his distresses would be alleviated by the profits arising from the sale of the work.

Mr. Addington's humane dispositions, however, were in some degree frustrated. The bookseller retained half the profits; and the sum which Dermody received on account of the publication thus highly patronized and *thus shared*, was scarcely sufficient to alleviate in the smallest degree his accumulating distresses. Mr. Hatchard indeed asserts, "that the account has been settled to the satisfaction of the gentleman who employed him." This being allowed, it is not necessary that the author of these Memoirs should inquire whether it was the original intention of Mr. Addington that Dermody should be deprived of any

of the benefits of the publication. If such was the case, it may well be supposed to have been contrary to the hopes and expectations of the wretched author; who had on every former occasion received an undivided portion of his generous patron's favour and protection; and this supposition agrees with the positive assertion of Dermody on his *death-bed*.

The principal poems in this collection are the *Extravaganza*, the Pleasures of Poesy, the Enthusiast, and Aribert and Angela; the latter of which, a legendary tale, is dedicated to his generous benefactor sir James Bland Burges, in the following sonnet:

" AGAIN my spirit wakes from deep repose,
Though deep not joyless; and each fairer dream
That Fancy on the pregnant trance bestows,
Bids o'er the page in lasting beauty stream.
But, ah! no dazzling glories shalt THOU find,
Such as illume thy own consummate lay;
No miracles of the effulgent mind,
To guide thee through invention's Milky-way.

A shepherd's simple song of ardent youth,
A rude narration, and of Love sincere;
Which Nature's mighty self, and virgin Truth,
Instill'd erewhile into his raptur'd ear:
Nor only shall it charm the village train,
If THOU wilt deign to list so low a strain."

Dermody speaks of this collection in the following terms.

"THOUGH it may not be properly my province to discuss the merits of my own performances, yet I shall venture to intrude a few cursory remarks on the additional verses which enlarge this collection; not, however, presuming to antedate the free right of opinion and judgment vested in the public, whom I esteem as my best patron in the hour of danger.

"The *Extravaganza*, which is perhaps the most original and fanciful poem I ever had sufficient powers to compose, together with the two Imitations of Spenser, have been honoured, while in manuscript, with the very flattering approbation of some of

the first literary characters of the day. I do not think myself entitled to particularize the respective names of those celebrated personages: neither might it afford any very favourable idea of my personal modesty; whatever scope it might yield to the emotions of gratitude, and the public avowal of my feelings. My professed aversion to the arbitrary and ill-founded innovations of some modern reformers, has induced me to aim at the manly style of our poetical fathers; and to attempt the revival of spirited sentiment, relieved by the chaste and graceful simplicity of forcible diction. How far I have succeeded, and what degree of lenity may be due to the ardour of emulation, must rest entirely on the candid decision of the reader. I shall at any rate have the conscious satisfaction, in case of a failure in execution, of considering that my efforts were laudable and unassuming, untinctured with the slightest hue of critical arrogance; and content myself with the

beautiful and appropriate reflection of Silius Italicus:

> Explorant adversa viros; perque aspera duro
> Nititur ad laudem virtus interrita clivo."

These pieces, however, possess a degree of merit which the poet did not attach to them. The *Extravaganza* is full of that delightful fancy which is the result of superlative genius alone, and which extends its creative powers to visionary worlds.

There are also many beautiful passages to be found in the Pleasures of Poesy: the whole is strongly conceived; and the sentiments by which he has delineated the powers of his poetical ancestors, are happily combined and fancifully expressed. The moral reflections are likewise calculated to improve the mind, and paint with beauteous imagery the comforts arising from patient resignation under affliction. After enumerating the pleasures which wealth produces, he applies this healing balm to genius pining in obscurity:

"Then wail not, Genius, thy unworthy lot,
Where'er thou sadly shrink'st from sight profane;
Thy patient labours shall not be forgot,
Nor lost the influence of thy lofty strain.
From Glory's nodding crest, of crimson stain,
The laurel shall forsake its seat sublime;
The prostrate column load the groaning plain;
While rising o'er the wreck, thy sacred rhime
Shall fire to noble feats the sons of future time.

"Vagrant, and scoff'd, and houseless, as thou art,
The powerful spell of thy exalted theme
Shall wake to bolder deed the warrior's heart,
Shall breathe o'er sleeping Love a brighter dream;
From ev'ry line shall fresh instruction stream.
The cottage-hearth thy pensive plaint shall hear;
In regal hall thy glitt'ring harp shall gleam;
The dark cold breast of lonely sorrow cheer;
And start from Frenzy's lid Conviction's frozen tear."

The poem of the Enthusiast is such as only an enthusiast in the art could produce, when the unbridled fancy is set at liberty, and roams through boundless tracts of visionary delight. The first stanza will justify this assertion:

"With hurrying finger smite the fervid wire.
Th' intolerable rapture tears my soul;
I burn with inspiration's fiercest fire;
In lawless liberty my senses roll
Beyond demurer Reason's coy control,
Beyond the sapient bounds by Prudence laid;
And while unwonted fantasies inspire,
Amid th' interminable waste of shade,
In mad delirium lost, my daring tour is made."

Danger is finely portrayed in these lines;

"High o'er the headlong torrent's foamy fall,
Whose waters howl along the rugged steep,
On the loose-jutting rock, or mould'ring wall,
See where gaunt Danger lays him down to sleep!
The piping winds his mournful vigil keep;
The lightnings blue his stony pillow warm;
Anon, incumbent o'er the dreary deep,
The fiend enormous strides the lab'ring storm,
And 'mid the thund'rous strife expands his giant form."

Madness and Love are next described, and Jealousy follows:

"Ah! who is she, of dark unsettled brow,
That bleeding drags an angel-shape behind,
And quaffs the living gore?—I know her now:
'Tis Jealousy; that monster of the mind,

In whom are thousand contraries combin'd.
Now moping, melancholy, o'er the wild;
Now fretful, rash, unreas'ning, unconfin'd:
In Constancy's best blood her hands defil'd;
And strangling in its birth her own devoted child."

He now floats down the smooth declivity of nether ether, to a sheltered vale, where he mingles with the fantastic bevies of "faery land."

"MINIONS of moonlight, let my slow step steal,
Unbalm'd and guiltless, on your secret sport;
Removing soft the visionary veil
That wraps from vulgar ken the elfin-court,
Where no unhallow'd visitants resort.
Lo, where the lords of faery-lond appear!
Chieftains, and frowning peers of princely port,
Sage counsellors with piercing eye severe,
And less distinguish'd knights fast trooping in the rear.

"The monarch's self majestic terrors grace:
Tipp'd with a horse-fly's tongue, a rush his spear;
A gnat's slight pinion shades his martial face;
A fish's scale his armed shoulders wear,
Lin'd with a scarf of shining gossamer;
Unknown in listed fray the prize to yield,
His rapier is a hornet's sting severe;
Superior to the rest, his shelly shield
Undauntedly he shakes, and overlooks the field."

The other pieces in this collection possess sufficient merit to delight the reader of taste; and it will be found also, as the poet has himself modestly expressed, that "they are neither licentious nor immoral; and though sparingly illuminated by the vivid coruscations of wit, not frequently destitute of ethic observation and salutary precept."

But, alas! the period was now fast advancing when the praise or censure of the world could avail him nothing; his poverty and his disorder (a rapid decline) had so destroyed and reduced both his spirits and his frame, that medical aid could only be applied to relieve, not restore him. He was blind however to the alteration which his malady had made in his appearance; and fancied that the strength of his constitution, and proper nourishment, would remove his illness, and renovate his spirits. Unfortunately, his situation was at this time unknown to those liberal friends who had so often assisted him: he had withdrawn

from their notice; and, conscious of his imprudence, would not apply, lest his story should be disbelieved, and his solicitations slighted. The aid afforded by the very few who were acquainted with his present melancholy condition, was not sufficient to procure the comforts his daily increasing malady required.

To alleviate the evils by which he was so heavily oppressed, he requested the author to write in his name to the earl of Moira, sir James Bland Burges, and his early patron Mr. Smith of Dublin. This was done, and in his wretched apartment he himself dictated the letters to which each of the following answers contains its writer's noblest panegyric.

To Mr. Raymond.

"*Tunbridge Wells, 13th June 1802.*

"SIR,

"ON my return from Maidstone I was favoured with your letter of last Saturday.

The interest which you take on behalf of the unfortunate Mr. Dermody, does infinite credit to your heart. I certainly estimate very highly his talents; and, so far as with propriety I could, I assisted him in his distresses. I am willing to draw a veil over the causes which induced me to break off my acquaintance with him; and if the annexed draft" (for ten pounds) "can, in your hands, contribute to soothe his present distresses, I shall feel some alleviation of the reflection that their issue is likely to be so fatal to a man of transcendant genius.

"I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

"J. B. BURGES."

To Mr. Raymond.

"SIR, *Edinburgh, June 6th,* 1802.

"I ENCLOSE to you a bank-note of ten pounds for poor Dermody; and am, sir, your obedient servant, MOIRA."

To Mr. Raymond.

" SIR, *Merrion-square, June 29th.*

" I AM grieved at having been prevented from sooner acknowledging your letter with respect to Mr. Dermody; and thank you for the communication, however disagreeable its nature is, which you have done me the honour of making. Assure Mr. Dermody of the sincere interest which I take in what concerns him; of my sorrow at hearing that his health is so infirm; and the warm and cordial wishes which I feel for his speedy and complete recovery, and success in life. Will you please to advance to him, for the present supply of his necessities, ten guineas on my account? which I shall immediately transmit, on being advised by you that you have done so. Allow me also to request that you will write me without delay an account of Mr. Dermody's state of health, and general situation; and suggest such plans as may

occur to you as the most eligible and practicable for his more permanent relief and advancement, to which I shall be very glad to contribute. Let him not despond. He has in England the patronage of my lord Moira. Here (on an inferior scale) I think, what between his own merit and my influence, a good deal can be done for him; enough, if he have health and prudence, to place him beyond the want of any assistance, and in some degree in the situation which his genius entitles him to hold. My father, who has seen your letter, and recollects Mr. Dermody with just esteem for his talents, will cordially join in endeavouring to contribute to his comfortable establishment.—I have ceased to be solicitor-general, and am now a baron of the exchequer. My address is, Merrion-square.

" I hope soon to hear from you; and have the honour to be, sir, your very humble servant, WILLIAM SMITH.

"*P. S.* I shall go the circuit on Monday. If you write to my father, he will communicate to me the contents of your letter. I mention his address: 'Right honourable the Master of the Rolls, Harcourt-street, Dublin.'"

The above letters revived the broken spirits of Dermody, and for some time he appeared to have conquered his disorder. The generosity of these friends enabled him to procure necessaries, and discharge many of the debts which had caused him so much uneasiness: though he was not altogether released from the importunities of his low associates; to whom, besides sharing with them the bounty of his benefactors, he had made over his half-pay for the term of three years. The letter from sir James Bland Burges gave him much pleasure: as he had himself previously written the following to that gentleman;

and by not receiving any favourable reply to his solicitations, conceived he had given cause of lasting resentment.

To Sir James Bland Burges, Bart.

" Sir,

" Whatever may have been my past errors and your just indignation, surely this will be softened by the appeal of extreme sickness and extreme sorrow. For two months I have suffered the most racking torment from an asthmatic complaint, without medical (nay, without common) assistance. In a word, I am plunged in the deepest distress. O sir, my once great and good friend, do not suffer me to languish unnoticed, but exert yourself in my behalf! a very trifle would procure me much comfort, a trifle which by generosity could not be missed. I enclose a paragraph from the Mirror; of which I am proud,

as it tells me the world still thinks me possessed and worthy of your protection.

"I am, sir, your obliged and grateful servant,

"THOMAS DERMODY.

"10, *Portpool-lane, Gray's-inn-lane, 6th June* 1802."

His satisfaction was no less on perusing the letter of his affectionate and early friend the honourable baron Smith. During some weeks he appeared in a state of convalescence: but being attacked by violent nightly coughings, and constantly importuned by his needy landlord, his spirits failed; he again sunk into his former melancholy; and to avoid demands which he could not satisfy, early in the month of July he fled from his wretched lodging; and without giving notice of the circumstance to any of those constant friends who under every difficulty had kindly assisted him, took shelter in a miserable cottage

near the village of Sydenham in Kent; from which, when driven to the last dreadful extremity, he sent the author the following letter.

To Mr. Raymond, 239, Piccadilly.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"You no doubt have been greatly surprised at my departure. I had neither time nor opportunity to relate my miseries. My poverty, and the importunities of my unfeeling landlord, compelled me to leave those abominable lodgings in Portpool-lane; and I cannot say I have changed for the better. Pray, my dear friend, write to lord Moira again: say I cannot live long, and it will be the last favour conferred on an unfortunate youth. I expect nothing but friendship from you at this fatal period, and therefore will not scruple to ask an extraordinary favour on *my death-bed.* I am in want of every thing; and in saying

this, I need not tell you that the smallest assistance will give me comfort—I cannot live, and my last hours are full of misery. The favour I have to beg is, that you will call again upon Mr. Addington, and explain that you have seen me: say his last bounty is expended: he is generous; and though I do not deserve his kindness, I think you will not fail to move him.

"You will write me immediately, as you perceive I employ another to write. Forget me not, my dear friend; I have troubled *you* long, but cannot much longer. God bless you! THOMAS DERMODY.

"*9th July.*

"Direct to me at Mr. Lance's, baker, Sydenham, Kent."

This letter, the last he ever wrote, unfortunately did not reach town for several days. On the 15th of July the author, accompanied by Mr. Allingham, went to visit him. They found him in a wretched

hovel, leaning over a few embers which hardly gave warmth to his shivering and emaciated body, in a state of the deepest misery and dejection. He had scarce power enough left to express the grateful sentiments which their visit inspired: the words faltered on his parched lips; his eyes became filled with tears; and being unable to give expression to the strong feelings which laboured in his breast, he sunk again into the melancholy position in which they had discovered him, and continued silent for a considerable time. These emotions having subsided, he endeavoured to relate the particulars of his unhappy situation; but was often obliged to pause, in order to gather sufficient strength to encounter the violent and oppressive cough which momentarily returned. The deserted appearance of the house, better calculated indeed for the retreat of a horde of robbers than the abode of a dying person, and the wretched poverty displayed in the few arti-

cles of furniture which it contained—(a few shapeless stools; some faggots of wood scattered on the floor; and a crazy bedstead without curtains, placed opposite a door which admitted through its crevices both the wind and rain)—added to the gloom which was observable on entering it, and the reflection that a human being was there struggling with a fatal disorder without either medical assistance, the comforts which sickness requires, or the necessaries requisite for the mere support of nature, occasioned the most painful emotions in his two friends. When he had recovered a little from the agitation which their appearance had occasioned, he raised himself from the drooping posture in which for some time he had placed himself over the fire; and fixing on the author his sunk eyes, said, "Thank God for this friendly visit! I thought I had given the whole world, and you in particular, cause to forget me. I have deserved the severest

censure; but do not now remember I have done so." The caution was needless; his past errors were buried in the recollection of his present sufferings, and he had little to dread from the chidings of those who had now to perform only the few last offices of friendship. When his disorder allowed him to enter for a moment into conversation, he assumed a spirit which, though faint, was yet mingled with the eccentricity that had on almost every occasion marked his character, and which was equally observable on trivial and on important matters. While the author was stating to him some particulars which he imagined might be conducive to his comfort and recovery, Dermody broke suddenly from the conversation, and observing that Mr. Allingham had taken up a volume of Hudibras which lay on the table, said with a ghastly smile, "You see I am merry to the last." A violent fit of coughing succeeded this effort; when, with a presentiment of his

approaching dissolution, he said: "That hollow cough rings out my knell."

The comforts which his situation required and admitted having been ordered to be procured for him, his two friends went in search of a more comfortable and commodious lodging; which they speedily procured on the most delightful part of Sydenham-common, where he was to have a careful nurse, and to be removed the following day. Some money was now given to the landlord for his use: and having assured him that they would return the next morning and convey him to the apartments they had provided for him, his visitors took their leave; not without a hope that their solicitude for his happiness, and the anxiety which they had expressed for his recovery, would have soothed his apprehensions, and secured him comfort during the tedious night. Their hopes however were vain, and their labours ineffectual. Dermody expired the same evening, at the age of twenty-seven years and six months.

The necessary orders having been given for his funeral (the expences of which were defrayed by those distinguished persons who had so frequently administered to his wants while living), on the day appointed, his body, attended by Mr. Allingham and the author, with a few friends of the latter, was conveyed to the church of Lewisham: where, previously to its being consigned to its native earth, the funeral service, that last solemn awe-inspiring ceremony, was read with much dignity and fervour by the honourable and reverend Mr. Legge (the present dean of Windsor); who afterwards attended the body to a grave formed on a spot the most solitary and romantic that fancy could describe. Over his tomb, at the expence of his generous friends, the author has been enabled to erect a monument to his memory, with the following inscription: extracted from a poem written by the poet, entitled "The Fate of Genius."

" No titled birth had he to boast:
Son of the desert; Fortune's child;
Yet, not by frowning Fortune cross'd,
The muses on his cradle smil'd.

" He joy'd to con the fabling page
Of prowess'd chiefs, and deeds sublime;
And e'en essay'd in infant age,
Fond task! to weave the wizard rhime.

" And though fell passion sway'd his soul,
By Prudence seldom ever won,
Beyond the bounds of her control,
He was dear Fancy's favour'd son.

" Now a cold tenant does he lie
Of this dark cell, all hush'd his song:
While Friendship bends with streaming eye,
As by his grave she wends along;

On his cold clay lets fall a holy tear,
And cries, 'Though mute, there is a poet here.'"

The character of this extraordinary youth has been so clearly developed in his actions and his writings, that scarcely any thing is left now to be related of his acquirements

and general habits, that has not in some degree been already said in his history. Yet as there are shades of character, and degrees of passion, which do not prominently shew themselves in particular instances of conduct, the author is induced to add the following particulars, gathered from a long intimacy, a thorough knowledge of his disposition, and a close observance of the distinguishable propensities which degraded his genius, and retarded his progress to happiness and independance.

He was of a middle stature, well formed, and of a spare habit of body; he had a comprehensive forehead, full dark eyes, strongly marked eye-brows, and a countenance expressive of genius, but tinged with reflection and melancholy. He was ungraceful in his deportment, slovenly in his person, diffident in his address, and reserved in his conversation; he had a simplicity and a modesty in his manner that created esteem and even respect: when irritated, he was

rather sullen than passionate: yet quick and inconsiderate in his resentment, sacrificing his interest to the impulse of imagined wrongs, and the attachment of his best friends on the slightest grounds of ideal offence. His poetical powers may be said to have been intuitive, for some of his best pieces were composed before he had reached twelve years of age; at which period he united in the full vigour of manhood, the strongest judgment and most unbounded fancy. His language, when he could be drawn into argument (which was always a hard task), was nervous, polished, and fluent. His classical knowledge (which was indeed wonderful, and is on every proper occasion displayed in his writings), added to a memory uncommonly powerful and comprehensive, furnished him with allusions that were appropriate, combinations that were pleasing, and sentiments that were dignified.

He had an inquisitive mind, but could

never resist the temptations which offered to seduce him from his studies. He was easily persuaded to forsake propriety: and paid as little regard to the character of his associates, as he did to the rules of prudence, the dictates of reason, or the opinion of the world; which last he at all times set at defiance. No one ever wrote with greater facility; his mind was stored with such a fund of observation, such an accumulation of knowledge gathered from science and from nature, that his thoughts, when wanted, rushed upon him like a torrent, and he could compose with the rapidity with which another could transcribe. On every occasion he discovers a clear judgment, a fancy filled with the richest ideas, and an intellect capable of delineating the grandest objects. He knew all the various shades of character; and a close observation of the world enabled him to describe the changes of human manners, and the involution of passions, with an

energy that was pleasing, elegant, and instructive. His similitudes and his inferences are never spoiled by the glare of false thoughts; and though carelessness may sometimes be discovered, yet by a peculiar propriety of expression, and a nice adaptation of epithets, this fault is not always discernible.

There is scarcely a style of composition in which he did not in some degree excel. The descriptive, the ludicrous, the didactic, the sublime; each, when occasion required, he treated with skill, with acute remark, imposing humour, profound reflection, and lofty magnificence. He delighted to wander through the romantic pages of antiquity: and had the happy talent of imitating the natural dignity and manly style of his poetical ancestors, with an effect which always gave to his productions the air and grace of originality; though his period, his stanza, and his thoughts, were modelled on the poet whose

path he intended to follow. But in the height both of his imitation and of his fancy, the wildest excursions of his muse, he never forgets to make Nature his guide; and it may with confidence be said that no poet at such an early (if at any) period of life, ever copied her with more truth, or more keenly touched the hearts of his readers when his subject required the slumbering passions to be brought into action.

When the variety, the number, the beauty, and moral tendency, of his juvenile (they may almost be styled infantine) poems are considered; when their pretensions shall be examined, and their merits acknowledged; the follies of his youth will be forgotten or absolved; censure will be corrected with pity, while admiration is mingled with regret. What he had written before he arrived at the age of fourteen (portions of which have been laid before the reader in the course of this work) will surely jus-

tify these opinions; and will at the same time create astonishment when it is added, that the poetry which he had already composed at that period, would fill ten volumes of a moderate size. His translation of the Epitaphium Damonis of Milton, his Monody on the death of Chatterton, the Ode to Fancy, the Hymn to the memory of Thomson, the Dirge on Fidele in Cymbeline, the Elegy on himself (the last of which poems the reader has seen in the preceding sheets, and the others will form part of a future publication), with many pieces of equal merit, were produced before he had reached his twelfth year, and are monuments both of his learning and his genius. The early poems of Cowley, of Milton, and of Pope, bear no comparison with these; and will be found to possess less thought, less fancy, and less nature. In the cast of his mind he resembled the unfortunate Chatterton, and in his propensities the eccentric Savage: but in precocity of

talent, and of classical information, excelled both them and every other rival; having in the first fourteen years of his life acquired a competent knowledge of the Greek, the Latin, the French, and Italian languages, and a little of the Spanish. Like Savage, he would participate in the pleasures of the lowest company; but had not the same eagerness after money, nor the same effrontery in demanding it of his friends: and notwithstanding Dermody's insatiate desire for liquor kept him in perpetual poverty, yet his applications for relief (though full of lamentations) were never degraded by meanness or fulsome adulation; nor did ingratitude, in his worst excesses, ever sully his character through life. Savage however did not refuse by such means to indulge his low debaucheries, and gratify passions which were mean, selfish, and revengeful. No one was more greedy of fame than Savage, or paid more regard to the correction of his works; yet he often

sunk the noble spirit of the poet, by praising at one time without sincerity what at another he would ridicule without decency; by flattering him at one time without discrimination, whom at another he would wound without a cause; and at all times valued friendship only as it could be rendered subservient to his wants, conducive to his pleasures, or propitious to his dissipation. Dermody had a nature in some degree opposite to this; and only resembled Savage in his genius, in his misfortunes, and in his habits of living. He was as heedless of fame, as he was indifferent to the reception which his writings might meet with from the public: he seldom corrected his works, but dismissed them with as little ceremony as he would shew to a lecturer on prudence, a stranger who had called to borrow money, or an acquaintance whom he never wished to meet again. The rich blossoms of his genius, from the first moment when they were discovered "wast-

ing their sweetness on the desert air," expanded and flourished under the cherishing influence of liberal and exalted patronage, and the nutritious warmth of admiration and encouragement: but the instability of his temper never suffered them to fasten in the rich soil to which they had been transplanted; and by an unhappy fatality of conduct his "bud of hope" (like Shakspeare's violet, "sweet but not permanent") bloomed but to perish. Had he qualified those errors which hurt only himself; had his ambition kept pace with the encouragement which he received; had he studied and pursued moral with the same ardour as poetical propriety; had his regard for character and decorum equalled his poverty and his love of dissipation; he might have lived to be the admiration of the great, the wonder of the learned, and the ornament of society; science might have smiled upon his labours, fame might have proclaimed

his excellence, and posterity with delight would record his name: but mistaking the way to happiness he plunged into misery, and fell an early victim to imprudence.

THE END.

ERRATA IN VOL. II.

Page 47, line 18, *for* versum, *read*, versus.
307, — 22, *for* fane, *read*, fatre.

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